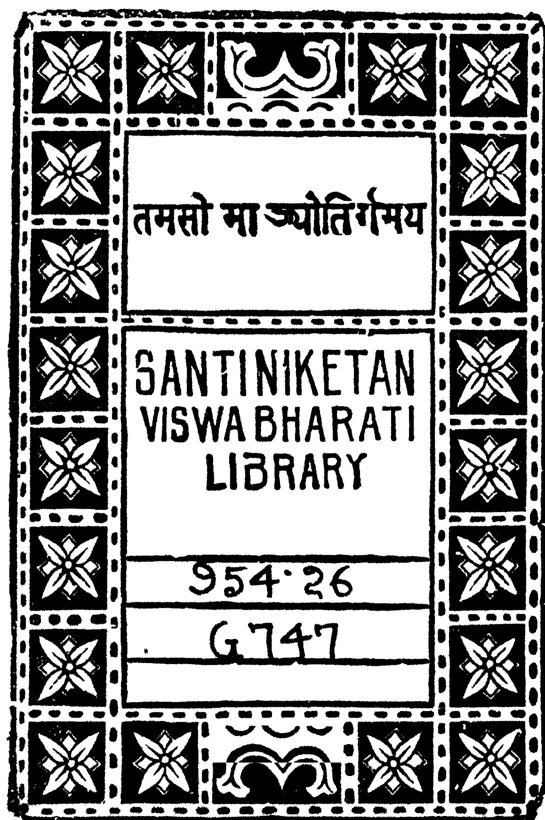


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THE MAIN CURRENTS

of

MARATHA HISTORY

Originally Patna University Readership Lectures 1926, now greatly enlarged, rewritten, and brought up to date.

BY

GOVIND SAKHARAM SARDESAI, B.A.

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PREFACE

Since the first edition of these lectures was printed seven years ago, a great advance has taken place in the research of Maratha history, particularly on account of the ample selections from the *Peshwas' Daftar* published by the Government of Bombay. While editing these selections I had to wade, with the help of my staff, through the vast mass of old papers, both historical and administrative, and naturally obtained an insight into many useful topics, which I consider indeed to be more valuable than the papers actually published. I do not like to allow this experience to perish with me and am ardently seeking means to put it on record. In the mean time the demand for copies of my Patna Lectures has long been pressing, and I am now trying to meet it immediately after obtaining relief from my undertaking at the Peshwas' *Daftar*. While revising these lectures for a fresh edition, many new points have struck me for which I have now tried to make room without materially altering either the original plan or the size of the book. The main object of these lectures was to interpret Maratha history from purely Maratha standpoint, to those who cannot study the original materials at first hand owing to their ignorance of the language. This object I have scrupulously followed even now. But there were obvious gaps in the performance when it was first executed. No mention was made about the rise and career of Shivaji, or the grand successes of Peshwa Bajirao I. and his brother. A sudden jump was taken from the death of Shahu to the Maratha War with the English, thus skipping entirely over the important event of Panipat or the brilliant career of Madhaorao I. These topics I have now put in and incidentally made a few alterations in my discussion of the character and achievements of Mahadji Sindia and Nana Fadnis and of the causes of the Maratha downfall which form the subject of the last chapter.

My readers will bear in mind that I have by no means attempted to write herein a full history of the Marathas. My purpose is to supply a running constructive criticism and a reasoned interpretation of the salient features involved in that vast subject, more or less following the lines of Sir Alfred Lyall, in his brilliant work, *The British Dominion in India*, although I do not claim to possess his critical powers or his sound judgment. Having purposely avoided entering into minute details and thereby making

the treatment cumbrous, I have tried to explain the aims and objects, the strong and weak points, the motives and general nature of the Maratha power, correcting and adding what appeared necessary from a personal study and experience, and removing the misconceptions and wrong views which I happened to notice during the course of my reading. Readers may judge how far I have succeeded in this rather ambitious design. All I can claim is that the views herein expressed are entirely my own, as any presentation of historical topics is bound to be. It would be absurd in an undertaking of this kind to try to please this or that school of thought. But I know I have tried to avoid partisanship and to give out an impartial reading of the old Maratha days. If history is to be of any practical use, an unbiassed and fearless criticism is, in my opinion, most essential, and, in this respect, I feel I have tried to meet the educational needs of all students so far as the Maratha period of Indian history is concerned.

I cordially repeat what I wrote in the first edition, viz. that, "the Patna University have laid me under deep obligations, by undertaking to have the lectures printed promptly and under my personal supervision at Calcutta. I cannot also omit to thank my valued friend Prof. Sarkar for the kind and ready help he has rendered me in this task, shewing thereby what a keen interest he takes in Maratha History."

Kamshet,
Dist. Poona
1st Dec. 1933

G. S. SARDESAI

CONTENTS

LECTURE I, pages 28

MAHARASTRA DHARMA,—THE IDEAL OF THE MARATHAS

PAGE

1. Muslim influence did not penetrate into the south 1
2. The two traditions of Devagiri and Vijayanagar blended in Shivaji 5
3. How Maharastra Dharma or the Maratha spirit actuated the Marathas up to the last 7
4. Meaning of *Maharastra Dharma* 11
5. Evil effects of this Maratha ideal 13
6. Visible marks of Maratha influence along the scared rivers 14
7. Influence of this political ideal on Marathi literature and society 21
8. Legitimate Maratha pride in past achievements .. 26

LECTURE II, pages 30

HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN MAHARASTRA

1. Extent, scope, and limitation of historical research 29
2. Indian history has yet to be constructed by a synthesis of materials from all sources 31
3. Fortunate lead given by two eminent scholars of two distinct types, Sarkar and Rajwade .. 35
4. Rajwade 38
5. Parasnis 41
6. Khare 42
7. *B.I.S. Mandal* of Poona 43
8. Sardesai 47
9. The spirit actuating a national history,—the task before the nation 51

LECTURE III, pages 41

SHIVAJI'S CONCEPTION OF A HINDU EMPIRE

1. Shivaji takes his cue from his father 59
2. Main incidents in Shivaji's career 63

PAGE

3. Influence of Ramdas and other saints 64
4. The coronation ceremony and its purpose 69
5. Befriending Hindu princes 70
6. All-India travel and experience 74
7. Measures for uniting Maratha elements 75
8. Aurangzeb's correct estimate of the danger .. 76
9. The War of Independence 77
10. How Shivaji's example inspired others 78
11. *Chauthai*, its origin and purpose 80
12. Love of the Maratha Deshmukhs for their patrimony 82
13. Origin of *Sardeshmukhi* and *Saranjami* 86
14. Perversion of the original object 94

LECTURE IV, pages 36

SHAHU AND THE MARATHA EXPANSION

1. Early life of Shahu,—situation at Aurangzeb's death 100
2. Division of the Maratha Kingdom,—why the Peshwas looked to the north 103
3. Services of Balaji Vishvanath 105
4. The Rajput pact of non-co-operation with the Emperor,—Shankaraji Malhar 108
5. The brilliant career of Bajirao I. 112
6. The process of Maratha expansion, interchange between north and south 116
7. Shahu's personality and character 121
8. Shahu's last days, the question of succession and how the Peshwa handled the situation 127
9. Change in Maratha Government, the Peshwa's mistakes 130

LECTURE V, pages 21

DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM-MARATHA CONTEST

1. The battle of Panipat,—antecedent causes 136
2. Abdali accepts the challenge 140
3. Dattaji Sindia killed 141
4. Sadashivrao Bhau beaten 143
5. Results of the battle 146
6. A Muslim view of Maratha conquests 148
7. Madhavrao, the greatest of the Peshwas 151
8. British jealousy at the increasing Maratha power 155

Lecture VI, pages 33

MAHADJI SINDIA AND NANA FADNIS

Page

1. Three periods of Maratha history 157
2. Early careers of Mahadji and Nana.. 159
3. How the two leaders won the First Maratha War 163
4. Physical and temperamental differences between the two 165
5. Drawbacks of Nana's policy 170
   (a) WANT OF A CONCILIATORY SPIRIT 170
   (b) DID NOT REALIZE BRITISH PRESSURE IN THE NORTH 173
6. Confused affairs of Mahadji 176
7. Limitations of Nana's power 180
8. What could have been done for future safety .. 184

Lecture VII, pages 38

THE DOWNFALL OF THE MARATHA STATE

1. The Peshwai hastening to its end 190
2. Marquess of Hastings on Bajirao II. 192
3. Bajirao's last effort 193
4. Causes of the Maratha downfall 195
   BAJIRAO AND DAULATRAO PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE 195
5. Neglect of science 198
6. Neglect of artillery 200
7. Lack of organization 202
8. The Maratha and the British personnel, —a contrast 205
9. False notion of religion 207
10. Superior British politics 212
11. How far is caste responsible for our downfall? Peculiar position of the British 214
12. Prominent Maratha personalities 221
13. Munro's reflections on the Maratha strength .. 223
14. Lingering memory of the past 224
15. The task before us 226

INDEX 229

THE MAIN CURRENTS OF

MARATHA HISTORY

"All Empires, all states, all organizations of human society are in the ultimate, things of understanding and will."

—H. G. Wells

Short History of the World.

LECTURE I

MAHARASTRA DHARMA
THE IDEAL OF THE MARATHAS

1. *Muslim influence did not penetrate into the south.*

The one subject of great historical importance on which many eminent scholars in Maharastra have concentrated their attention in their research, has reference to the prime aim of the Marathas, I mean, the conception of their Swarajya, their object in striving for it, the principles for which they stood, the main unifying force which heartened them in times of trouble and adversity, and enabled them to work for national uplift for some two hundred years. The subject is obviously vast and intricate, and ranges over a large extent of literature, tradition, and the lines of succession of very many saints, teachers and leaders of the Maratha people. It

would be very instructive to examine it from old writings and records, and from the mass of literature produced by many recent scholars, who have thought and written on the subject. I cannot, therefore, do better than take it up for discussion, at the beginning of my task, by way of clearing the ground of Maratha history in general, and present to you a few facts and views and some of the important results of study and research in Maharastra on this basic subject. It was that great scholar and thinker M. G. Ranade who, in his brilliant work *The Rise of the Maratha Power,* first described the process of nation-building in the Deccan, and set down *Maharastra Dharma*, the duty of Maharastra, to be its guiding principle. The original and full meaning of this phrase requires a searching examination, so as to furnish for us the clue, by which we can understand, why of all the nationalities of India, the Marathas alone found it possible to establish an independent power for a pretty long time.

India south of the Nerbudda was never completely subjugated by the Muhammadans, in the sense in which northern India was. The Hindu princes in the north, from the time of Jaipal and Prithviraj to that of Rana Sanga, had struggled hard but in vain to roll back the onrushing tide of Muslim conquest. The Rajput princes were entirely crushed; they became servants of the Emperors, contracted marriage alliances with them, and submitted to them in all matters of religion and discipline. The sacred places of the Hindus were violated, their temples were pulled down, their religious

practices were interfered with; in other places, wholesale populations were converted to the Muslim faith. One has only to visit any important city in northern India, in order to realize the havoc caused to Hindu temples, images, palaces and to old Sanskrit inscriptions, as, for instance, at Dhar and Mandugad, in fact, to all that every nation cherishes as sacred and inspiring. An old *bakhar* of Mahikavati (Mahim near Bombay), finished in 1578 by one Bhagawan Nanda Dutta, with many portions written centuries before that time, has been discovered and printed. It contains the following description of the terribly depressing condition of north Konkan, after it fell into the hands of the Muhammadans in 1348. Says the author: "All religion was destroyed; ties of friendship and relationship vanished; the Kshatriyas lost all sense of duty towards the country. They gave up their arms and took up the plough instead. Some took up the profession of mere clerks and the rest were reduced to the humiliating position of slaves and Shudras, while a host of others were wiped out of existence. Most of the people lost their self-respect and the Maharastra Dharma was totally destroyed." But, while the Hindu mind in the north had helplessly submitted to violence and force, the onward march of Muslim conquest received a strong check in the south, where the invasions of Alauddin Khilji and Malik Kafur had but made a transitory impression. The fierce hand of Muhammad Tughlak could not win the Deccan for Delhi, and although the rebellious Hasan Bahmani established an independent dynasty at Gulbarga, that

kingdom, for all practical purposes, was a Hindu rule with only a nominal mixture of the Muslim element.

For two hundred years preceding the birth of Shivaji, forces were at work in the Deccan, facilitating Hindu independence at different centres of more or less magnitude and influence. Shivaji only supplied the adhesive element unifying the scattered units, and shrewdly worked upon the religious sentiment, which so strongly appealed to the popular imagination. Rajwade aptly differentiates this spirit of Maharastra from that of the other provinces of India, by calling the former *jayishnu* or "conquering", and the latter *sahishnu* or "passively suffering." This genius or spirit of Maharastra runs unmistakably through the utterances of her saints and preachers, and through the actions of her warriors and diplomats. The expression *Maharastra Dharma* is known to have been used for the first time by the author of a popular Marathi work *Guru-Charitra* or 'the life of the great Guru Dattatreya,' composed somewhere about the middle of the 15th century, although the Maratha saints had preached and spoken of Maharastra Dharma long before. The late Prof. Limaye, a great authority on history, says: "What the saints of Maharastra did was to create the moral force that would exalt and ennoble the political ideal of the Marathas. There were two main factors making up this national movement, the one representing the political power wielded by the more or less independent Jagirdars or Deshmukhs (of whom I am going to speak in a later discourse), who

opposed Shivaji in his early career, and the other represented the moral force, which the people derived from the preaching of Ramdas and other great saints. Shivaji stands forth for the synthesis of the two. Himself the son of a great Maratha nobleman and as such possessed of power and influence, he was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the teachings of the saints. Inspired by their high ideals, he strove to realize them in his life and in doing so, he was prepared to risk both his power and position. That is the significance of Shivaji's life-work, and it is that which entitles him to rank by the side of the greatest of the world's heroes ".

2. *The two traditions of Devagiri and Vijayanagar blended in Shivaji.*

At the outset we must remember that Shivaji did not start his national work all of a sudden. His three predecessors in the family were all clever men, imbued with the national spirit common to all Marathas, in an increasing degree in succession. They all seem to have been clearly inspired by the traditions coming down to them in two d'stinct currents, the one starting from the Yadavas of Devagiri of the 13th century on the northern border of Maharastra, and the other from the *Rays* of Vijayanagar of the 16th century on the southern; the first coming through Shivaji's mother Jijabai, who was descended directly from the Yadavas, and the other from his father Shahji, whose life-work was cast in the historic regions of Vijayanagar. The grand titles assumed by the Yadava kings such as Pratap

Chakravarti, Samasta-Bhuvanashraya, Samrat, Shri-Prithvi-Vallabha, and their national banner bearing the golden image of an eagle,* were vivid emblems fresh in the Maratha memory, directly inspiring them with ancient glory, liberty and independence. Similarly as regards the *Rays* of Vijayanagar, the famous Deva-Ray concentrated his attention on improving horsemanship as the principal arm of guerilla warfare, particularly suited to the hilly broken country of the Deccan, which later on Shivaji and his successors so cleverly developed and so successfully utilized in attaining their life's purpose. An old paper records a dialogue between Rama Ray, the victim of Talikot, and his mother, when, on the eve of the famous battle (January 1565). he went to ask her blessings for his success. Says Rama Ray: "This our country has been a favourite resort of our gods, Brahmins, religion, and charities. Five Muhammadan kings have combined and conspired to destroy it. In order to prevent such a catastrophe, let me, mother, go with all my forces and conquer them. Do you confer your blessings on me." This conversation describes the attitude of the Hindu mind and shows how the spirit of religion had inspired it to rise against Muhammadan oppression in the south long before Shivaji, who simply took up the cue later with the same object, as the *bakhars* and other records go to prove. The influence of the teachings of the saints and particularly of Ramdas, I will

* सुवर्णगरुडध्वज.

have occasion to explain later, and need not repeat it here.

The famous verse adopted by Shivaji and ever since continued by his successors as an inscription on their state seal, is another strong evidence of the same spirit. It runs thus :— "Ever-growing like the crescent of the first moon, and commanding obedience from the world, this seal of Shivaji, the son of Shahji, shines forth for the good of the world."* The late Mr. Bhave, a penetrating scholar, maintained that this verse was formerly used by the Moreys of Javli on their seal; Shivaji borrowed it from them with a few suitable modifications of his own.

3. *How Maharastra Dharma or the Maratha spirit actuated the Marathas up to the last.*

This vein of Maharastra Dharma not only sustained the nation through their most terrible trials during their long struggle with Aurangzeb, but was faithfully kept up through the subsequent transformations and later expansion of the Maratha empire. The first four Peshwas have left ample evidence of their having ever kept this ideal of Maharastra Dharma before their eyes. In all their undertakings in the north, and their dealings with the Rajputs and other races, they steadily strove, not so much for empire or power, as for the release of the famous holy places of the Hindus from the Muhammadan hands, *viz.*, Prayag, Benares, Mathura,

---

* प्रतिपच्चंद्ररेखेव वर्धिष्णुर्विश्ववंदिता ।
शाहसूनोः शिवस्यैषा मुद्रा भद्राय राजते ॥

Hardwar, Kurukshetra, Pushkar, Gadamukteshvar and others; in the end they succeeded in taking possession of nearly all, except Prayag and Benares, which never came back into Hindu possession. In a memorable letter which Shahu addressed to his cousin Sambhaji, when the latter leagued with the Nizam, Shahu says: "This kingdom belongs to gods and Brahmins: the blessings of God Shankara and goddess Bhavani, enabled our great and revered ancestor Shivaji to rescue it from the hands of the Muhammadans. What a pity it is, then, that you should have given up our Maharastra Dharma and sought shelter with the enemies of it. Our family boasts of descent from Ramdevrao Yadava; it does not therefore behove you to go contrary to our grain." Shahu's greatest Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was so fully imbued with this spirit of religious liberty for the Hindus, that, in a letter of 1752 he asks his agent residing at the court of the Nizam to remind him (the Nizam) that, "We Maratha *ganims* are the disciples of the great Shivaji Maharaj", conveying thereby a hint as to how they were actuated by religious motives in their dealings with the various potentates of India, and how they were trying to complete what Shivaji had undertaken.

Even as late as the early nineties of the 18th century, the famous Maratha diplomat Govindrao Kale, who long resided at the court of Hyderabad, thus writes to Nana Fadnis, and congratulates the Maratha Government on the signal achievements of Mahadji Sindia in regulating the affairs of the Emperor at Delhi, and fulfilling the objects of Maratha policy. The

letters and despatches of this Govindrao Kale have been printed in several volumes, and show him to have been a man of high principles and great capacity, fully breathing the Maratha atmosphere of those days. I will quote the letter in full, in order to give you a correct idea of what the Marathas of those days felt and talked: "If I were to adequately express all that I have felt, upon reading your most inspiring letter, giving an account of the crowning glories achieved by Mahadji at Delhi. I should have to write volumes; still I cannot repress my enthusiasm, and I make myself so bold as to transgress the ordinary limit, and write some of the uppermost thoughts of my mind. Each single item gives occasion for a separate congratulation. India extends from the Indus to the southern ocean; beyond the Indus comes Turkistan; these limits of India have been under Hindu control since the days of the Mahabharata. But some of the later Hindu kings lost their old vigour, and yielded to the Yavanas who thereafter became powerful. Delhi was captured by the Chagtais; the culminating point came in the reign of the great Emperor Alamgir. Every sacred thread received an imposition of Rs. 3/8 for payment of Jazia: *pucca* or cooked food was offered for sale in shops, and people were compelled to buy it. This oppression brought on a reaction. The epoch-making Shivaji rose in a small corner to protect the Hindu religion. Thereupon came such luminaries as Peshwa Balajirao and Bhau Saheb, who gave fresh light and hope to the whole of India. This spirit later on possessed Mahadji Sindia so much, that he was able to fulfil

the ancestral purpose. If we had *tawarikh*-writers like the Muhammadans, they would have written volumes on Mahadji's victories, for they know how to magnify small things up to the skies. We Hindus are of a reverse temperament. We do not speak out even about signal doings. Impossibilities have indeed been achieved. The Patil-bova (Mahadji) broke the heads of those who tried to raise them. All wished him ill luck, but he did accomplish his object dauntlessly. This victory will surely bear the desired fruit on the model of the great Shivaji. Let no evil eye soil this glorious result. Not only have territories and kingdoms been acquired by this victory, but the protection of the Vedas and the Shastras, the foundation of religion and unmolested worship, the preservation of Brahmins and cows: in fact, this suzerain regal power of the Marathas, this fame and glory, all have now been achieved and proclaimed in the loudest accents to the world. To preserve this grandeur will be the glory of Patil-bova and yourself. You must not be remiss in this task. All doubts about our supremacy over India have been set at rest. Grand Maratha armies must now be stationed on the plains of Lahore, for there exist countless evil-doers, who rejoice at our reverses and try to compass our downfall." Poor Govindrao did not conceive of a new danger from the west through the sea!

I have purposely quoted this long letter which is dated 2nd July 1792, that is, exactly ten years before the transfer of the sovereign power from the Maratha hands into the British. Many letters of

Nana Fadnis are extant addressed to Mahadji-Sindia urging him to obtain from the Emperor a transfer of the Hindu holy places from Muhammadan control and an explicit circular order prohibiting the slaughter of cows throughout India. Such an order was obtained and paraded with great pomp in Poona. I need not stress this point further, having made it sufficiently clear, not only how the great ideals were constantly surging in Maratha minds right up to the last, but how high their spirits were, even when their fall was imminent, as we know it now.

4. *Meaning of Maharastra Dharma.*

I am not here discussing how far this ideal of Maharastra Dharma was right, or whether it was harmful, and whether in the long run it did good or evil to India as a whole. This point I shall have to discuss later. I only wish to emphasize here once more, how the main point of Maratha history has been missed by very many writers, owing to their inability to grasp and trace this Maratha ideal through the character and actions of the race as well as their literature and history, like the ancient Hellenic culture, which is said to have actuated the Greeks in their national expansion. The best minds in Maharastra have devoted their energies to the discussion of this topic ever since the day of Ranade, and have, time and again, proved by fresh evidence the existence of this grand purpose, of which I have not been able to present here more than a bare outline. Materials discovered in Maharastra have been read and discussed so frequently and so exhaustively,

that I could not very well omit this pervading topic in my talks on Maratha history. *Radha - Madhava-Vilasa - Champu*, *Mahikavati-Bakhar*, *Shiva-Bharat*, *Parnala - Parvata - Grahan - Akhyan*, *Talikot - Bakhar*, the *Shakavalis*, the *Rajaniti* of Ramchandra Amatya, and letters and papers of Shahji and his ancestors, and the utterances of older bards and saints, as also inscriptions and documents about gifts to temples and Brahmins during Maratha and pre-Maratha times, all these are growing in volume and importance every day, and testify to the existence of this religious spirit of Maharastra Dharma in the minds of the people for a long time. Shahji was the patron of poets and literature; two of his proteges, Jayram and Paramanand, wrote several works, which have recently been discovered and printed and deserve careful study.

Says Rajwade: "Those born in Maharastra are called Mahárástrás=Marástra, corrupted into Maráthá. The country inhabited by the Maharastrikas came to be called Mahárástra. All the Hindu castes from the Brahmins to the *Antyajas* residing in that country, obtained the comprehensive name Marástra or Maráthá. The religion of all these Marathas came to be called by a comprehensive title Maharastra Dharma. It includes four elements *viz.*, (1) practices towards gods and injunctions of the Shastras (*Deva-Shastrachara*), (2) local practices (*Deshachara*), (3) family practices (*Kulachara*) and (4) caste practices (*Jatyachara*). The inhabitants of Maharastra were bound to follow all these." Says Justice Ranade: "The only motive power which is strong enough to move the

masses in this country is an appeal to their religious faith. During the last 300 years the whole of India had been visibly moved by the new contact with the Muhammadan militant creed, and there had been action and reaction of a very marked kind, particularly in Maharastra." I cannot enter into the full details of this problem here, which requires patient and original study, and which is difficult to grasp merely from translations. But to understand Maratha history properly, all the sources must be read in the original and considered in their proper light.

5. *Evil effects of this Maratha ideal.*

Let me say frankly that however useful this ideal of Maharastra Dharma might have been in securing national interests in the beginning, to me it appears as not an altogether healthy one. Its main drawback was that it made the Maratha mind entirely inert and unprogressive. Dominion means progress, and unless there is provision for making changes to suit the changing requirements of succeeding times, no power can last long. This spiritual ideal of the Marathas was often impracticable, giving rise to a rule in practice, amounting to "we must not change the old, must not take up the new." Shahu acted on this principle for 40 years and made it the condition of his transfer of power into the hands of the Peshwas at the time of his death. Even now we painfully realize how tenaciously the Indian mind sticks to old impracticable Shastras and their injunctions, as in the case of the removal of

untouchability, even though they had been proved unsuitable to our present situation. In all practical matters of the Hindus, every item of life is based on religion. We are proud of quoting, in season and out of season, the Smritis and the Shastras in support of what we may happen to be doing. This conservative turn of mind prevented the Marathas from acquiring new education and new ideas, from travelling to western countries, or training their own men in western science and western warfare, so as to introduce new methods and processes of work into their constitution. How this affected the Maratha power I shall relate later on. For the present it is enough for me to point out, how the failure to detect this underlying and unifying principle of Maharastra Dharma, has led many a writer to describe Maratha rule as mere outbursts of an inborn tendency for ravaging, pillaging, destroying, doing good to nobody. This wrong notion has much vitiated the character of Maratha history and requires correction.

6. *Visible marks of Maratha influence along the sacred rivers.*

It is interesting to trace the results of Maratha rule to this ideal of Maharastra Dharma and examine them from the general character of the people. We cannot look for a Taj Mahal or a Kutb-Minar in the works left behind by the Marathas. We know, of course, they never had the leisure, the peace and the money that are necessary for such constructions. But even if they had these, they

never in my opinion possessed the requisite inclination. The Maratha race, as their soil and history have made them, are a rugged, strong and sturdy people, intelligent, self-assertive and practical, having in their mental cast the urge of utility towards life and action, patient, industrious and penetrating in learning and study, hardy, frugal and calculating in their temperament, but not emotional or showy idealists. They always had an eye for practical interests and the conveniences of life, in all that they planned and accomplished. Whatever one could expect from such a character and from their religious turn of mind already alluded to, has doubtless been profusely in evidence in the Deccan and elsewhere, wherever Maratha influence penetrated. They built temples, bathing ghats on rivers, tanks and wells, walls and forts, residential palaces contrived for protection and convenience, serais and hill-passes. The temples and their vicinities were usually the places for schools where the Vedas and the Shastras were taught, their cost being defrayed from assignments of land or cash, styled *anna-chhatras*.

The Maratha edifices are by no means pretentious. They are ingenious in conception and exquisite in execution, when minutely examined. Big black stones were specially brought to the Deccan from the river Gandaki for working them into images, some of which are indeed remarkable for their skill and art. Most of these temples and images are to be found in out-of-the-way places, away from the railway, and have hardly attracted the notice of the present day advertising

travellers. About 30 years ago the late Rao Bahadur Sane, a touring Maratha official in the Educational Service, had occasion to visit nearly every village in the Poona and the Kolaba Districts of the Bombay Presidency, and being fond of observation, kept a record in the form of a diary, in which he wrote down every peculiar point that met his eye. Extracts from these diaries, which have recently been published,* yield a most valuable and interesting account of the relics of old Maratha rule and conclusively prove that, after all, that rule was not so barren of results as is generally supposed. Waterworks, temples, tanks, images, palaces and forts, are to be found nearly everywhere built by the various Sirdars and Jagirdars who served in distant parts of India, but who had a sort of a home capital in the Deccan. Jambgaum of the Sindias, Wafgaum and Chandwad of the Holkars, Davdi and Nimbgaum of the Gaikwads, are only a few among the plentiful existing types of the past Maratha constructions. The old Peshwas' palace at Nasik, now occupied by the District Judicial Courts, is indeed a monument worth being recorded as a work of art. The tank at the shrine of Jejuri on the top of a hill is large and beautiful, having been constructed by Baji Rao II. The paths of the ghats and the temples there, are all very well executed and exhibit care and skill of construction. The temple of Bhuleswar in the same vicinity is also a fine building. The Katraj tank, which then supplied water to the

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* *Vividha-Dnana-Vistar*, Feb. 1915 to August 1920.

city of Poona, was executed by Peshwa Baji Rao II. The temples and images at Pandharpur, Theur, Chinchwad, Alandi and Gangapur are indeed excellent specimens of the works which the Peshwas executed. The skill and proportion of the stone images will indeed beggar description. The ghat on the Bhima at Pimpalner, the small but beautiful tomb of Mastani at Pabal, the temple of Someswar at Chas, the temple and tank at Karanjgaum and Verul, the temple of Lakshmi-Nrisinha at Narsingpur built by Vithal Shivdev, the temple and travellers' houses at Morgaum, the Vishnu Mandir at Uran, constructed by the Bivalkars,—these and various others of this type, will, if properly brought to public notice, certainly prove that the Marathas were not entirely devoid of artistic skill, or a sense of beauty; nor was their rule so barren of results as many in ignorance have supposed.

But mere grandeur, waste and lavishness, were not in their grain; temples, rivers, conveniences of water and residence, hill-paths and ghats, spacious and convenient dwellings, designed more for use and protection than show, have received every attention from the Maratha rulers, who cannot therefore be charged with the neglect of works of real public utility. This tendency of Maratha constructions is also amply visible in northern India, wherever the Maratha influence penetrated. It requires examination and study. The fact is, that under the general impression that the Marathas were merely vandals and freebooters, few have cared to investigate and bring to light those unpretentious, but impressive

and often exquisite relics executed during Maratha times. The cursory exploration of only two districts mentioned above, ought to be extended to the other districts and distant corners of Maharastra, and all available papers, objects and traces of historical interest brought to light for the use of students and scholars. I can say from personal experience, that heaps of papers and material of great utility are still to be found in all important centres of Maratha activity, awaiting the search and sympathetic handling of earnest workers and well-to-do publishers, who care for our historical past. The Rastes of Wai, the Patwardhans of Miraj and Sangli, the Pratinidhis of Aundh and Karad, the Surves of Shringarpur, the Shirkes, the Jadhavs, the Moreys, the Jedhes, the Nimbalkars and Ghorpades have all had their centres of work and influence, small capitals, so to say, of these historical families, wherein they concentrated all their attention, money and labours for over 200 years.

The grand and rich valleys of the two sacred rivers, the Godavari and the Krishna, with their numerous tributaries offer a most fruitful field, not only for search and collection, but for the publication of useful illustrated guides or albums, based on a national historical conception. The Godavari starts from Trimbak, a place in mountain fastnesses to which the Peshwas and the leading families paid frequent vistis of pilgrimage; a few miles below are two places hallowed by the residence of the two historical female figures, Anandvalli, the residence of Anandi-Bai, wife of the famous Raghoba, and Gangapur

the residence of Gopika-Bai, wife of Peshwa Balajirao and mother of three brilliant but unfortunate sons of historical fame: Viswas Rao the eldest lost his life at Panipat, his younger brother Madhav Rao died a premature death from consumption at the age of 28, after a splendid rule of 11 years, full of grand achievements; and the third and youngest, Narayan Rao, was murdered at the instigation of his uncle Raghoba. Their mother Gopika-Bai is said to have been so overcome by grief at this last bereavement, that she left her palatial residence at Gangapur in agony, and lived in a hut at Panchavati opposite Nasik, living on the alms which she begged from door to door. Down the river stand Nasik and Panchavati, already too well known to need special mention. Sangvi, Kopergaum and Kacheswar, still lower down, are all places abounding in relics of the latter day Peshwas. Puntambe, Nawase, Kaygaum and Tonke, Shevgaum, Paithan, Rakshasbhuvan, Shahgad, Pathri, Nanded, Brahmeshvar and very many other places down this great river will, I am sure, repay a thorough inspection and publication of illustrated old historical relics. As a race we lack that spirit of travel and observation which is to be found in the west, and which has yielded there such abundant results and topics of national interest.

The river Krishna, rising at Mahabaleswar, offers a still more fruitful field for research and active interest. Dhom, Menavali, Wai, Mahuli, Karad, Sangli, Miraj, Kurundwad, Wadi and other places lower down, all deserve to be investigated by means of an active

campaign. I have not the time here to refer to smaller streams like the Bhima, the Nira and others, nor to the larger and more extensive valleys of the Tapti, the Nerbudda and the Chambal. The genius of the Maratha race has worked along river streams and among mountain fastnesses, which deserve to be thoroughly ransacked, if we wish to build up our historical past on authentic data. A similar research is also required outside Maharastra in nothern and southern India, particularly where the Maratha influence penetrated. Dhar, Devas, Indore, Ujjain, Jhansi, Saugor, Gwalior, Banda, Mathura, Bithur, Benares and various other places, not to mention many similar ones in the south, all bear plentiful signs of the influence and culture imparted by the Marathas, which will repay the labours of a special study. I have dilated on this point, specially to draw the attention of students to the various directions in which research can and has to be carried on.*

In Maharastra such a campaign of research was started first by Rajwade and continued by a band of poor but devoted workers, whose tours and experiences have been printed in the annals of the *B. I. S. Mandal* of Poona, containing detailed descriptions of historical places, old monuments, folklore, village songs, obscure poems of old writers and bards, and other relics of bygone days. In the midst of our

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* An effort in this direction is being made during recent years by various organizations whose object is to foster the fellow-feeling of the Maratha communities residing in outlying places styled Greater Maharastra, and thereby to increase the output of useful information bearing on various topics of our literature and history.

every day busy life, our students hardly command the leisure and the patience which such a careful study requires. Signs, however, are decidedly hopeful for historical research, when one notices at the present moment several earnest workers in distant parts of India busily engaged in sifting available sources and constructing a true story out of them.

7. *Influence of this political ideal on Marathi literature and society.*

So far at any rate as present research goes in Maharastra, the Marathas can rightly boast of possessing in a printed form, *Bakhars* or chronicles, personal and public letters, accounts, Government documents, sanads and decisions, treaties, genealogies, diaries and chronological entries, and various other forms of historical material, which probably no other people of India has, in the same proportion or of the same variety. They are also different in nature from those of the other parts of India. Of all these papers, the letters are by far the most important in a historical sense, since, plentiful as they are, we can prepare with their help a connected account of all important events occurring in Maratha history and, nearly always, from different points of view. Since language is only the outward expression of the actual life and occupation of a people, Marathi literature increased with the spread of their activities, from the time when Shivaji raised it to the status of the language of the court, in the place of Persian. Important affairs of the army, navy, forts, justice,

revenue accounts and other subjects, came all to be written in Marathi since Shivaji's days and this change in a short time enriched that language to an enormous extent. With the increase of work many individuals and families coming from out of the way places, received fresh inspiration and encouragement.

There was hardly any prose worth the name in Marathi before the days of Shivaji, when all the best literature used to be in poetry and that too of a devotional and religious character. But when Shivaji and his father started their new work, battles, campaigns, treaties, engagements and orders became the order of the day, and these required to be committed to writing. The adventures and achievements of Shivaji and his followers, his victory over Afzal Khan, for instance, or his visit to the court of Aurangzeb, or the thrilling capture of Sinhagad by Tanaji Malusre, soon captivated the people's imagination, and Shivaji's mother Jijabai herself took the lead in getting them immortalized in bardic poetry for popular recitation all over the country. Samples of such songs, or *powadas* as they are popularly known, have been translated into English verse by Acworth, and will give to non-Marathi readers some idea of the activities of those days. Shivaji employed learned pandits to coin an official vocabulary by translating technical terms from Persian into Sanskrit and prepared what is called the Raj-Vyavahar-Kosh, *i.e.*, a dictionary of technical names for the use of the court. The Persian element soon began to give place to Sanskrit, which came to be drawn upon

for all kinds of high-flown writing, so that in a hundred years' time the character of the language was entirely changed. While Eknath, the greatest Marathi writer of the 16th century, uses nearly 75% Persian words and expressions in his works, Moropant's Marathi of the 18th century is nearly all Sanskrit with hardly a 5% mixture of Persian.

There is a prevalent notion that modern Indian prose is a creation of the 19th century of the post-British days, started in imitation of the great prose writers of the west. So far as Marathi is concerned this notion is not quite accurate. A particular kind of prose writing of a very high order did come into existence during the 150 years of Maratha activity. Language, like industries and other national concerns, needs official patronage for its growth and prosperity, and when Marathi received the required patronage, it shone all the brighter, as we can see for ourselves from the published papers. It is necessary for all of us to realize, in how many different ways Swarajya improves the status of a nation, and why all the world is striving for it. If a nation's soul is reflected in its literature, we can clearly read it in the prose chronicles of the Marathas, some of which will take a high rank among prose writings. Sabhasad's account of Shivaji, the *Bakhar* of Bhau Saheb, the *Kaifiyat* of the Holkars, and the two *Bakhars* of the Peshwas, are all compositions of a high class and correctly reflect the doings of the Marathas, their hopes and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their capacities and shortcomings. But it is the letters which would appeal

to the reader most. They are written by experts with the particular object of impressing the writer's views upon men in power, who were in charge of the executive government. More than a hundred printed volumes of such letters exist at present, which show how the writers (*Chitnises*) and translators (*Parasnises*), came to be in great demand all over the country. Every Maratha leader had to employ expert writers in his camp, in order to despatch news, or explain a distant situation to the central authorities, and obtain definite orders on important and delicate affairs of State.

The members of the Chitnis family were all consummate writers, whose accumulated heaps of written matter strike the imagination wonderfully. When news-letters were received from distant places and read at Satara or Poona, some of the writers were at once noticed for their excellent style and cleverness, and were picked out for higher posts. Thus, as the empire extended, the art of writing received a great impetus. Some of the letters and productions of those days which we now read, are indeed of a very high order and show how highly the Marathi language and penmanship were cultivated. I have now and then given by way of samples English translations of some such papers in these discourses. If a comparative estimate of these Maratha writings is made, I think, some of them will indeed take a very high rank and compare favourably with some of the best specimens of the diplomatic despatches of the west. I imagine the other nationalities in India have similar papers of historical value:

in their possession, and if they have not, they must try and make sure that they are not lying in oblivion, either in private possession or State archives. Amatya Ramchandra Nilkantha, Khando Ballal and his son Govind Khando, Chimaji Appa and his son Sadasiv Rao, Peshwas Balaji Bajirao and Madhav Rao, Brahmendra Swami, Shripat Rao Pratinidhi, Trimbakrao Pethe, the Purandares, the Hingnes, the Patwardhans, Nana Fadnis, his agent Sadashiv Dinkar, Krishna Rao and Govind Rao Kale, these and various others were all capable and skilful writers, who have fully depicted in their productions the Maratha spirit of those days, making us feel as if we were living in those stirring times.

Along with military leaders, traders, merchants bankers, engineers, and other craftsmen had in great numbers to accompany Maratha expeditions, for supplying the needs of war and administration, and showed great efficiency in executing their tasks. There were, besides, news-writers to convey information of the military and diplomatic operations at every stage, from one corner of the country to another. Revenue collectors and accountants kept records, and brought in tributes and other dues. Builders and engineers erected forts and battlements, and built roads, ghats and temples on hills and the river banks. Judicial and police arrangements followed in the wake of conquest, thus starting regular peaceful life for all workers in the country. Scholars, pandits, priests and saints soon followed when settled conditions were effected and, by means

of personal character and devotion to duty, so moulded the life of the outside people as to make Maratha influence distinctly affect society and religion. They built temples, opened schools and free kitchens, and subtly and unobtrusively introduced for a time Maratha culture into the north, the inhabitants of which for a long time afterwards found this Maratha penetration healthy and beneficial. People in those days could perform their pilgrimages and return home, full of enthusiasm for the re-establishment of Hindu rule throughout the land. They looked upon the Maratha leaders as the liberators and defenders of their faith. The records of the Patankars at Benares, of the Hingnes at Delhi, of the Khers at Saugor, of the Kolhatkars in Nagpur and west Bengal, and of persons of lesser note at Lucknow, Mathura and Prayag, bear ample testimony to these side activities of the Marathas. No jarring note is to be detected in these peaceful efforts; on the contrary the northerners appreciated them whole-heartedly. Any one who takes the trouble of studying minutely the contemporary accounts narrated in the old papers, and compares them in detail with the earlier Muhammadan invasions, during the Pathan period particularly, can easily realize the contrast between the two, and see how the penetration of the former was mild and congenial, and that of the latter destructive.

8. *Legitimate Maratha pride in past achievements.*

The Marathas alone of all the various nationalities of India, put forth the strongest organized

opposition to the growing Mughal power, and ultimately crushed it. In the course of this process, they evinced capacity, tenacity, patience, and judgment, so that they can be very well called benefactors of India. They worked, in their own way and according to the standards of those times, for the welfare of the country, as much as was then possible for any Indian power to do. And if they had not been unexpectedly called upon to face an organized Western power, they would in all probability have created a Hindu empire in India. If, on the contrary, the Peshwas had not taken the supreme charge of the Maratha Government after the death of Shahu, the situation in the Deccan would at once have paved the way for British intervention in Western India, simultaneously with Plassey and Wandewash, which gave the British their first supremacy in Bengal and Madras respectively. The least credit, therefore, that must go to the Marathas, is that they put off the onrush of British arms into Western India by at least half a century. Otherwise, the Plassey of 1757 would have simultaneously seen its counterpart in the Deccan, resulting in a similar fate for Western India. A people that put down the Muslim power, that for long resisted the British advance in all parts of India, that conquered and civilized the Gonds and other tribes in the distant north and the south, that have left plentiful permanent marks of their influence in a triangular tract, of which the three corners may roughly be put down as Nagpur, Surat and Tanjore, that ever stood for order, peace and culture, and

finally that saved the soul of India and enthused it with a new hope, are, in my opinion, entitled to a legitimate pride in their past history.

LECTURE II

HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN MAHARASTRA

1. *Extent, scope and limitation of historical research.*

A study of history means search for truth; and truth is never one-sided. It would not be possible for the Marathas to write a complete history from their own Marathi papers only. At most they will show only one side of the picture. The other sides are imbedded in various other languages and since Maratha history is but a part of the history of all India, however much it may appeal to Maratha sentiment, it must be completed from sources outside Marathi. A purely historical mind should be as impartial and analytical as a chemist's is in treating a piece of charcoal or diamond. A historian ought to possess the same impartial and critical attitude of mind in judging complicated human affairs, in order to sift truth from untruth, if his history is to prove serviceable. When, for instance, we have to treat of an event, say, the battle of Panipat, it would not do for us to rest satisfied with Maratha records only. We must look for all possible light from whatever channel it may be available. In the first place, we have not got together even all the letters and accounts that the various Maratha Sardars and writers must have despatched from their places in that momentous campaign.

But they had, in addition, dealings with the Rajputs, the Jats, the Emperor, his ministers, the various Rohilla chiefs, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, the Sikh leaders and generals, besides the foreign traders (British, French and Portuguese). Their accounts and papers are to be found in their respective languages. In order, therefore, that we may secure a complete picture of Panipat, we must try and secure all the foreign sources and then compose an account from them.

Even then the picture may not be perfect, for the human mind is always liable to err. If we see a fracas in the street happening before our own eyes, and if we have to give evidence about it in a court of law, we know how often each one has a different version to give, for each one observes only a part and that too from his own point of view. In this respect the human mind, which is alone the medium of communication, is like a piece of coloured glass; as a ray passing through the colour, gets a tinge of it, so does the human mind get a tinge of the communicating medium. You can, therefore, realize how very difficult this process of forming historical judgments and conclusions is. Are we then to consider all history false? No; certainly not. Treat history in the spirit of a science and one would find it serviceable at every stage. Herein also lies the real value of history. If there be no difference in views, no variations in the estimates of men and events as set down by different writers, history will contain only stereotyped sets or bundles of facts unchanged and unchangeable. They would

cease to be human or progressive, would give no exercise to the thinking powers of students, and prove more or less like scriptures to be taken on authority never to be questioned. History deals with the civilization of man all round, which is ever changing and which at every moment affects the destiny of man. History must exercise the thinking powers of students, if they would treat the subject scientifically. If they do not take the trouble to arrange, sift and classify facts on their own initiative, do not wait to find out for themselves, how far their own reason would be prepared to accept or dispute the correctness of those facts, it would no longer be a science. In history we must accept nothing on credence or authority, however eminent the authors may be.

2. *Indian history has yet to be constructed by a synthesis of materials from all sources.*

We can thus see how research is to be undertaken and what its limitations are. So far as Indian history is concerned, we are yet practically at the initial stage. European history, say that of England, France or ancient Rome and Greece, has long passed through these stages at the hands of many master minds, who have sifted the materials and given them a shape, which now can be accepted as more or less settled. A new fact may even now come to light here and there, and may change a little detail of this or that incident. But the main subject has been exhaustively treated. Besides, the free nations of Europe are creating history every-

day; in India, we have been hardly making any history at all, since the middle of the 19th century. We are passive on-lookers, struggling to obtain or create conditions and surroundings, which would enable us to make our own history. That is why the history of India since our downfall before the conquering power of Britain, ceases to interest us, ceases to fire our imagination, sentiment or pride. For instance, routed though the Marathas were on the field of Panipat, they yet take such a lively interest in all the incidents, persons or features of that memorable event, that their poets, research scholars, bards, actors, novelists are every day exercising their powers in writing about it ardently. The Shivaji-Afzal Khan incident or the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao, equally fascinates and engages the Maratha mind. It is but human, that the doings of our ancestors or of the sages and heroes of our religion, should appeal to our imagination.

History, however, has to take account of all these, not from a sectarian point of view, but with a fixed purpose synthetically to mould one single complete national history of India, out of all those elements, that may have a concern with the period with which we are dealing. And since we have to build up such a united national history of India we need more and more materials for our study, as we reach our own more complicated times. In the earlier centuries we used to live a more isolated, exclusive and perhaps quiet life; but in later times, with the increasing struggle for conquest and power, Indian affairs, whether political or social, became

increasingly intermixed; particularly is this the case with the history of the 18th century, when, with the decline of Mughal rule, the scramble for power and supremacy became more acute and involved more competitors. We can thus easily conclude what various sources of material we must look for, and in what directions we have to search for fresh light, before we can arrive at a fairly acceptable estimate of any given event. We have only recently been awakened to this part of our duty, and vigorous efforts in this field of national work are now being made by various scholars and bodies in the country. Steady and serious work always brings in a rich harvest. You can easily imagine how the life story of Shivaji, for instance, would have remained always incomplete and one-sided, had not Prof. Jadunath Sarkar brought to bear upon it his great powers of scholarship and investigation, when fortuitously he undertook the study of Aurangzeb, who had spent more than half of his long and active life in the midst of the Marathas. Sarkar's contribution to Maratha history is indeed invaluable, particularly as regards the materials available not only in Persian but in several European languages, which he has been able to secure after tremendous labours, expense, and patience, and which he has ably shown how to utilize in constructing a synthetic history of India as a whole. Various other gentlemen are now seen to be engaged in the same pursuit.

Just as Indian politics of the future can no longer remain isolated or confined to any one communal unit, so the history of the Indian nation of the

future is going to be a united whole, in which all individual units will have to merge themselves. Such a history has to take note of the strong and weak points, of the services and disservices, of every separate community, creed or caste, and has to mould them into a solid unity, in which all can take pride and which will supply to all, inspiration and useful lessons derived from past experience. To this common task each nationality of India ought to give the best that it can offer. The days are long past, for any community to emphasize its own individual doings; we have now to think, as I have said, of India as a whole; we have all to look upon her as a common mother, for whose honour we have to labour with equal zeal. Those who do not think in this strain of united India, have no room in the Indian nation of the future.

I am stressing this point purposely to show the severe and inexorable needs of historical research all round. This is not a task for one individual only, nor even for one community or language. All the languages and communities of India must add their own quota to make up this whole. This aspect of history does not seem to have been clearly grasped by us all. We are apt to belittle what others have done and make too much of our own doings. But each community's own past, whether glorious or gloomy, is ultimately essential only in so far as it serves this main purpose of a united national history. There is hardly any country or nation on the face of the earth, which has not jarring sects or divisions in it; but they have all united for a common purpose

and have achieved grand objects in mutual co-operation. The substantial unity of the Indian mind is often lost sight of, in the ardent desire to emphasize differences and divisions. Not only have the Hindus of India a common heritage to boast of, but even the Muhammadans, Parsees and Christians living in India have, under the stress of science and time, such a closely intermixed social life to lead that, for all practical purposes, they in common even now form a united whole. Only we must accustom ourselves to thinking in this vein, and that is what history is meant to achieve for us all. In this common life of a United India, our history has to play its part, and that is why I have stressed this point.

3. *Fortunate lead given by two eminent scholars of two distinct types, Sarkar and Rajwade.*

But the needs of historical research and its possible services in this common task of nation-building, seem only recently to have been clearly understood or generally recognized. Some 50 years ago, Elliot and Dowson translated into English only a few portions of a number of Persian chronicles, upon which the Muhammadan period of Indian history has mainly been based. During this half a century there have been various attempts in all provinces to collect old historical materials, letters, documents, chronicles, coins, seals, pictures, epigraphs, sculptures and other sources that could elucidate past events. So far as modern India is concerned, two indefatigable workers, more than

any others, have shown the right method of research, each in his own way,— Prof. Jadunath Sarkar in the north, and Mr. V. K. Rajwade in the south, although both of them have been more or less misrepresented or misunderstood. Those who closely follow their writings, their methods, and their treatment, have realized the immense advance in historical criticism and spirit, which these two eminent scholars have made in this subject. It was a fortunate coincidence for the history of India, that these two able workers could be found to tackle the problem not only from two different view-points, but also from the two main regional sources,—Sarkar presenting the northern side, and Rajwade finding the Marathi materials and presenting the southern side. Their previous equipment for the task was also, fortunately, entirely different. Sarkar, after a brilliant university career, acquired the experience of training students in colleges and universities ; Rajwade, imbued with an innate fire of the heart, which his university career served rather to kindle than to damp, devoted himself, after graduation, entirely to the service of national history. He taught himself the various subjects essential for historical research, such as the ancient and modern history of Europe and the world, comparative grammar, philology and epigraphy. Although working independently of each other and in different directions, they fortunately happened to concentrate their efforts on the comomon ground of Maratha history. Prof. Sarkar having taken Aurangzeb for his special study, was required to explore the period of Shivaji and work at it from

original Marathi sources, which, I am glad to say, he has mastered with great zeal and profit. This coincidence we must certainly bless with all our heart.[1]

It was the casual finding of a chronicle (*Bakhar*) of Shivaji's life in the early seventies of the last century, which led to a criticism of Grant Duff's monumental work at the hands of the late Justice Ranade and his colleagues. It was then discovered that many useful *Bakhars* and papers of historical interest existed in different places, which, if published, would not only correct the mistakes of Grant Duff, but would make a substantial addition to his history. Along with the historical papers many original manuscripts of poems and compositions of old Maratha authors were also discovered. A band of young workers, mostly teachers in high schools, undertook to edit and publish them in a monthly magazine devoted to poetry and history. Thus the *Kavyetihasa-Sangraha* was born. The last of those enthusiastic workers happily survives to this day, Rao Bahadur Kashinath Narayan Sane, now aged 75,[2] whose scholarship and devotion to the cause of Maratha history are quite well known in my part of the country. This magazine continued for 12 years and published some thirty volumes of historical materials, mostly chronicles, and one or

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[1] Besides Sarkar many other scholars outside Maharastra have made valuable contributions to the history of the Marathas such as Dr. Sen, Father Heras, Prof. Pissurlencar, Dr. Krishna Swami Iyangar, Prof. C. S. Srinivasachari and others. But as I am dealing with Maharastra only, I do not include these scholars in my review.

[2] He died on 17-3-1927.

two containing original letters and documents of rare value.

4. *Rajwade.*

This publication, however, did not rouse keen interest in history in the public mind; it died for want of support. The credit of creating such an interest belongs most certainly to Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade, now over sixty,[1] who is still carrying on his work, not in the modern but in the ancient period of India. With no means or money of his own, he, after leaving college, started a personal house to house search for old papers, not only in big historic cities like Poona, Satara, Nasik and Wai, but went on foot from village to village, tracing old Maratha families of Sardars, clerks and priests, and examining the stock of their papers on which he pored with a concentration and devotion hardly to be met with in ordinary life. Without heeding hunger or thirst, living on charity and accepting from kindly people gifts of money just enough to satisfy the bare needs of his travel, he roamed about for years, throughout Maharastra and through many parts outside, with heavy loads of old manuscript papers on his back, which he has now stored in different centres with friends and pupils, whom he collected round himself. His selfless devotion was so catching, that bands of intelligent and earnest workers soon gathered round him and helped to collect, store, read, sift, copy, print and publish the papers which

[1] Born 12 July 1864, died 31 Dec. 1926.

came into their hands. Indeed, Rajwade is a fine example of a recluse, *Brahmachari* and *Sanyasi*, showing what one man can do, if he but determinedly applies himself to a self-imposed task, regardless of difficulties and undaunted by want of funds.

Rajwade not only collected heaps of useful papers from unsuspected quarters, but showed what precious materials existed in private papers and account books, in sanads and documents of charities, in judicial decisions and personal diaries, which till then used to be considered as practically useless. The size and quality of any old paper, its make, the source from which it came, the kind of writing that it contained, and various other features of a like character, yielded most unsuspected results when handled with the trained skill of Rajwade. On his own initiative he has printed and published till now 22 volumes, each of about 350 pages of original papers, with learned introductions which, although not necessarily related to the subject of the printed papers, discussed various outstanding problems of history in general, and of Maratha history in particular, and imparted valuable guidance on the science, meaning and interpretation of human history and origin of thought and language.

Rajwade has brought out not only useful old papers, but reconstructed from them Maratha history of all periods, and in its various branches. His dissertations on the origin of human thought and progress, his theories of the origin of scripts and of the Marathi language, his scholarly contributions to the development of social and political life in the

various period of Indian history, such as the Aryan colonization of Maharastra, will ever prove valuable guides to all students of the subject, although further study may disprove some of his theories. He directs his keen eyes without fear, from the Vedas down to the Peshwas. You read his voluminous writings, and you are wonderfully impressed by his massive intellect in attacking intricate problems. With the aid of old papers, copperplates, inscriptions and philology, he handles the subject of historical research with a thoroughness peculiar to himself. His penetrating genius, his single-minded devotion, his tremendous sacrifice of worldly comforts and honours, entitle him to everlasting gratitude from his countrymen. An austere scholar by temperament and choice, and with no other interest in life, Rajwade is nothing if not strong, strong in his mind, strong in his body, strong in his convictions and strong even in his prejudices, of which he has many. Had he been as accurate a guide as he is a brilliant interpreter, he would verily have been the supreme leader of historical scholarship in India.

Rajwade's miscellaneous writings and investigations amount to some ten volumes more. On a rough calculation I can say, that he has brought out some 15,000 printed pages, without burdening any single person, all on his own initiative and resource. His writings are, however, heavy and uncouth, and never take account of the convenience or capacity of his readers. He would not cater to the taste of any one. His long prefaces and

discussions come in anywhere, in any volume, which the ordinary student will often find it very difficult to follow. But when they are carefully studied, they will certainly repay the labour bestowed upon them. They evince not only high scholarship but also slashing criticism.

5. *Parasnis.*

Rajwade's example soon attracted other workers in the field. The late Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis of Satara has rendered service to this cause, which ranks second only to Rajwade's, and which perhaps proves of greater immediate service to the student in studying past events. Not boasting of a high or university education, but gifted with a brilliant memory and untiring energy, Parasnis did his work, also entirely on his own resources, and collected papers, rare books, pictures, and other materials, which go to form what is popularly known as the Historical Museum of Satara, now handed over to Government as a trust for public use. While Rajwade did his work independently of Government, Parasnis utilized Governmental help and co-operation to the utmost extent. He, too, has printed some 40 volumes of materials in the monthly magazines named *Bharatvarsha* and *Itihasa-Sangraha* which would amount, I think, on a rough calculation, to some 15,000 pages, the main portion of which consists of the *Daftar* or records of the famous Maratha politician Nana Fadnis, who had located them in his own house at Menavli at the foot of the Mahabaleswar hills.

6. *Khare.*

Another scholar of a different type and preparation, but equally devoted to study and work, the late Vasudev Vaman Shastri Khare, employed as a Sanskrit teacher at the Miraj High School, found useful papers with the Patwardhan Sardar family of Miraj (in southern Maharastra), dealing with the latter half of the 18th century. He made a wise selection of them and annotated and published them with well arranged and suggestive introductions. He has up to now 14 volumes of 600 pages each to his credit. Khare's genius, not taking high flights like Rajwade's, proves immediately more useful to the average student.

The Indian Historical Records Commission appointed by the Government of India and holding its sittings at different centres, is also the outcome of the keen interest that Government have taken in this national subject. The individual attempts mentioned above were supplemented by the Government of Bombay who had in their possession heaps of old Marathi and English records, located in the Bombay Secretariat and at the Alienation Office in Poona. The last contains what they call the *Peshwas' Daftar*, from which selections were made, and nine good volumes of correspondence and other papers, printed by Parasnis with suitable brief notices in English at the bottom of each page. These are known as the *Peshwas' Diaries*. But the *Peshwas' Daftar* is an enormous store of old papers mostly administrative and a few historical, and

contains over 27,000 bundles in the Marathi language and the Modi script, and about 8,000 files in English. Government recently instituted a thorough investigation of these records and have printed several thousand letters with foot-notes in English. The work is still going on and is, when completed, likely to be of immense benefit to Maratha history. A useful handbook or guide to these has also been issued by the Bombay Government, who have now offered facilities to genuine students to inspect the records on the spot.

7. *B. I. S. Mandal of Poona.*

But considering that individual efforts were not sufficient to create the proper historical spirit in the public mind, Rajwade long ago suggested that we should have small bodies of scholars and workers, formed in every principal town of Maharastra and outside, with a view to making a thorough search of the historical materials existing in the neighbourhood, and collecting, discussing and publishing them at convenience so as to secure their ultimate co-ordination. Such a network of historical societies would certainly have been most fruitful, but the suggestion was not widely taken up, except in a few places like Poona, Satara, Dhulia, Baroda, Indore and others. The *Bharata Itihasa Sanshodhaka Mandal* of Poona has, however, earned a great reputation among them all. It has to its credit over a thousand paying members of various grades, a large fireproof building, and over 30 volumes of printed material, with a fairly large store of old papers and critical

essays. The scope of the *Mandal* is very wide as its proud name shows. It has devoted its labours not only to history, but to linguistic studies as well, by attending to the collection of old poetry, folk-lore and country ballads, which occupy more than half its printed pages. But the most conspicuous service of the *Mandal* consists not so much in bringing out fresh materials, as in discussing at its fortnightly and yearly meetings, and threshing out innumerable knotty questions and problems, ascertaining their minute details, determining dates and incidents, by sifting the available evidence, and thus settling a good many controversies.

The careers of Shivaji, his mother, father and grand-father and their various affairs have been closely scrutinized and an amount of useful information has been brought out bearing on those dim earlier times. The fortuitous find by the late Lokamanya Tilak of that rare document known as the *Jedhe Shakavali*, has given a more definite shape to the life and chronology of Shivaji and his surroundings. The *Mandal* lacks popular support, particularly of the monied classes; many poor research workers in the Deccan are struggling against the want of funds, and if sufficient money were forthcoming, there would be a rapid and valuable addition to the stock of the *Mandal's* publications. It has also suffered in publicity, owing to its work being carried on only in Marathi, which cannot reach those who do not know that language. The Dhulia school of workers first directed their energies mostly to the literature of the Ramdasi sect, which only partially helps the

main historic current of the Marathas, although very intensive in its character. They have now erected a building where the materials collected by Rajwade have been preserved and offered for study.

All these publications and those of other individual workers will, I think, amount to altogether some 300 printed volumes or about one lac of pages in Marathi, and nearly a quarter as much may be existing in a printed form in Persian, English and other languages, mostly concerned with Maratha history. With the help of a few friends, I once counted some 300 printed books all told on the subject. This appears a tremendously huge bulk; but what its real nature is, and what kind of service it has done, are questions on which I think I must say a few words. The history of the Shivaji period, which I may roughly date from 1600 to 1707, has undergone almost a new construction. The careers of Shivaji and his ancestors have now come to be entirely reshaped, with full and authentic details, since we are now on a much firmer foundation of fact than about 30 years ago. The credit of this goes mainly to Prof. Sarkar outside Maharastra, since, without him, the Persian sources and the European records would not have been first brought into use; but the credit equally goes to a devoted band of village to village workers, belonging to the *Bharata Itihasa Mandal* of Poona, of whom Rajwade was the pioneer.

The next period of Maratha history from 1707 to 1800, which can be roughly called the Peshwa period, is being worked at. The first half, that is,

up to the battle of Panipat in 1761, had till recently but scanty materials. Rajwade's first seven volumes made it possible to rearrange this period, for which Irvine's *Later Mughals*, Vols. 1 and 2, is also partially useful. The plentiful materials published from their Poona archives by the Government of Bombay have now to be carefully studied and co-ordinated towards the construction of a proper history of the first three Peshwas. This is indeed a very vast and urgent piece of work, since these selections bring to light many fresh writers and incidents hardly known before. The post-Panipat period has already profuse original materials, and here selection becomes a difficult task, just as the scantiness of the papers in the earlier half of the century obstructs the historian. The ten years' period from the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao to the Treaty of Salbye, 1773-83, is replete with original papers which, to my surprise, amounted to over 6,000 printed pages, Marathi and English, when I counted them. As is quite natural, time has made a havoc with the older records; while as we approach our own times, there is bound to be a larger mass available. The problem facing us in Maharastra in the immediate future, is not so much that of looking out for fresh materials for collection, but of selecting, printing and publishing those we have already secured, and utilizing them for constructing a reliable story from them. There are bound to be some gaps here and there, but they can be filled up as time goes on. So, if we have already printed some 300 volumes in Marathi, at least as many more can be easily and

usefully brought out, out of the heaps yet lying unsorted at Poona, Dhulia, Satara and other places, not to mention various individual possessions which still remain untapped.

8. *Sardesai.*

Of all the printed volumes of materials those of Khare only have been carefully arranged and annotated, while those of Rajwade and Parasnis have been published in a scrappy haphazard manner so that to read, classify, index, and arrange them in chronological order and according to subjects, is a task which I undertook and which I have by now completed, in my eight volumes of *Marathi Riyasat*, from the beginning up to the year of the extinction of the Maratha power in 1818. I am at present working on the Peshwa period of Maratha history, revising my original Marathi volumes in the light of the fresh materials published from the *Peshwa Daftar*. I have so far done all my work in Marathi, and I could not help it as the original papers exist mostly in Marathi. Some of Rajwade's most important papers appear in his volumes 1, 3, 6 and 8,—which are unfortunately now out of print. As a rule Marathi documents bear no dates or the names of the writers and the addressees. I had to read and arrange all these, make a list of places, persons and incidents, find out the correct dates of them from such references or clues as may be existing in their contents; and when they were arranged in this way, they began to relate a story of their own. I therefore did not concern myself so much with hunting out fresh

papers, as with utilizing those that had already been printed. This gave me the chance of studying the whole course of Maratha history, disclosed by original sources. While Rajwade, Parasnis, Khare and other scholars were doing immense labour in finding out and publishing new papers, they could not have a connected picture of the whole Maratha history before their eyes. They were too much pre-occupied with particular incidents or periods to spare attention for the whole. In fact their energies were taken up, in the first place, in reading the old Marathi manuscripts, which is not at all an easy task. They are invariably written in the old Modi hand, which changed from time to time. Rajwade is about the only expert in reading Modi of the earlier days. One has to read a paper of that age more than a dozen times, sometimes to show it to various other people in order to see if they could decipher some of the difficult words or letters correctly. The letters usually bear no date, sometimes only the day and the month. It is only the official *sanads* and formal State papers, which bear the date in three eras, the Muslim, the Shalivahana Shaka, and the era introduced by Shivaji at his coronation in the year 1674. But the usual class of private news-letters, concerning a thousand happenings all over the country, are as a rule without date, often the addressee and the writer are not at all mentioned, often also the top and the bottom have perished, and some are found mutilated. Heaps of such mutilated papers have been printed by Rajwade, which to an ordinary reader would not be clear, but as I had from the beginning made

indexes of persons, dates, events, places and other references, I found I was able to decipher most of the mutilated papers from their contents or from their tenor, and I could fix nearly all the dates accurately, or at any rate, approximately. The *Patren Yadi* volume of the *Kavyetihasa-Sangraha*, as also the recently published *Aitihasik Patravyavahar*, are indeed the most important, and are now properly edited and reprinted with all the corrected dates and other necessary references. In fact my original copies of most of these books have all been marked, and I have been urged by many scholars to print and publish all the verified dates and other corrections, for the benefit of future students, but I cannot spare time for this useful work just now. With the greatest difficulty I have been able to prepare and publish a sort of working index of the two great printed collections, I mean, those of Parasnis and of the B. I. Mandal of Poona, together with a complete list of all printed books, dealing with Maratha history, with the necessary details about them that a research student is likely to require.[1] I am mentioning all this, in order to convey to all workers outside an idea as to the kind of work we have been doing in Maharastra. The process requires a lot of correspondence, and one has also to be watching carefully for outside lectures, discussions or articles of historical interest, that are published in the

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1 These printed indexes are available for a nominal price with the Pant Pratinidhi of Aundh, Dist. Satara; and the list of books is sold by K. B. Dhavle, book-seller, Bombay 4, for 2 as. per copy.

various magazines and news-papers all over the country. With all my labour I cannot claim to be exhaustive or complete. I must have lost sight of many useful points. My studies have grown on me, and even the indexes to my own notes are daily increasing, beyond the working powers of one man. Nor can I utilize the help of others in this task, because all the papers must, after all, pass through one brain, in order to secure uniformity of method and interpretation. There is unfortunately no division of labour possible under Indian conditions. The toils of writers are not here shared by the publishers, as is done in Europe. I have to be my own clerk, copyist, record-keeper, often my own printer and publisher and often also the financier. My only consolation is, that many brother students are struggling like me at this time through similar difficulties, and this is the way in which we can all help one another. I draw your attention to all this, in order that we may secure as much co-ordination as possible between the scattered efforts and agencies, that are engaged in this national task all over the country, particularly outside Maharastra.

India is a continent containing several languages, which all have more or less old historical materials. We at present need representative scholars of each nationality, working in its own language and publishing their results through a common medium, which, for higher thought and interchange of ideas, is bound to be English for a pretty long time. I am very anxious to present in an English garb not only my past labours but the valuable

experience I obtained during my four years' handling of the huge *Peshwas' Daftar* at Poona, so as to make them available to readers not knowing Marathi. There are often traditions, anecdotes, gossips, reports, poems, or bardic songs, from which one has to cull whatever they can yield, always keeping an eye on rigid truth and the human frailties involved in the correct interpretation of past events. That is the way we can all help each other and co-ordinate our labours towards a common object.

9. *The spirit actuating a national history,— the task before the nation.*

I should like to explain, while on this subject, the spirit in which I think a national history should be viewed. Foreign writers are often carried away by unjustifiable prejudices. Even the impartiality of a historian has its limitations. He must remember that he is writing for his own people. He desires their edification, prosperity, well-being. He knows that he must point out national faults gently to correct them, and not depict them severely and unsympathetically, so as to depress them for ever. He must suggest to them their good points, not to make them vain or boastful, but to encourage them to greater and nobler efforts. A historian is in fact to a nation what a father is to his children. Both in reward and punishment, the father has always the good of his children at heart. That is why national histories in all countries have been written by one of the people. We must, of course, know what others have to say of us; but the sympathetic

spirit must run in the vein throughout. For there is none in this world so perfect and faultless, nor none so useless as to be entirely condemned. All national heroes can be presented to the rising generation in whichever colour one likes to paint them. That is why histories written by foreigners and often unquestionably taken as authority by some of our own scholars, are not found to possess the right spirit. There are, of course, exceptions and noble exceptions too. I am tempted to give here an instance of how history is often misread. Western writers of the early 19th century have spoken of the Maratha Jagirdars as forming a confederacy of states. But a confederacy means an alliance of independent and equal partners formed for a particular purpose. The Confederacy of Delos is an instance in Greek history, and the *Entente Cordiale* in the last Great War is another. Such a confederacy never existed in the Maratha State. There were doubtless Jagirdars, exercising influence and authority in various parts of India. But they were all subject to the central power, first, of the Chhatrapatis and afterwards, of the Peshwas; and if they disobeyed the Central Government frequently or occasionally, like the Barons of Feudal England, it was because the latter could not enforce obedience. The famous Ahalya Bai Holkar of Indore used to render yearly accounts of receipts and disbursements to the Peshwas right up to her death in 1795. An open defiance of the central authority took place only after the accession of Baji Rao II. to power, as he ceased to be an impartial head of the nation

as a whole. Even Mahadji Sindia never avowedly disobeyed the Peshwa or his agent Nana Fadnis. So the word confederacy has been used by writers for the Jagirdars of this Baji Rao II.'s period. The British then had begun to form independent alliances with them, such as the Bhoslas of Nagpur, the Sindia or the Gaikwad, with the avowed object of detaching them from their allegiance to the Peshwa. The Gaikwad was the first to accept the British approaches and to throw off the authority of the Peshwa.

Indian history suffers from other causes also. India has several nationalities, and the want of co-ordination or sympathy between the writers of the various provinces harms the main purpose. A Maratha or a Sikh or a Rajput is very often apt to make too much of his own race, and thereby give umbrage to others. This has resulted, as we look around us, in tension and disunion. I think, however, that if we in our historical studies always keep in view the ideal of building up an Indian nationality, out of all the elements that we have about us, we can benefit ourselves by emphasizing the good points that each Indian nationality can put forth on its behalf, from its own past records. We should all ungrudgingly welcome whatever others can say for themselves, provided it is supported by authentic evidence. Indeed, the two main races of India, the Hindu and the Muslim, being in the same boat, have been complements of each other, all through their historical past, and are practically indistinguishable from each other except in name. If the

idealism of the Hindu and the practical spirit of the Muslim, could join for the service of humanity, for which the whole eastern world is crying, the regeneration of Asiatic races would be greatly facilitated.

Workers in this field have also to bear in mind that no history can be allowed to become stereotyped or stagnant. It has to guide the nation at all times and hence it requires to be reshaped from time to time, not merely because new facts come to be discovered, but because new aspects come into view, because the participant in the progress of an age is led to standpoints from which the past can be regarded and judged in a novel manner. On this account a history has always to be growing and is a progressive science in which the changes in the world give to old facts a new significance and in which every truly penetrating and original mind sees in the old facts something which had not been seen before. Great writers have emphasized this view of history at all times.

I have so far explained to you, how we in the south and the west are occupied; we now need the help of the north and the east. I am told there are heaps of Persian papers all over northern India, scattered through many important towns, institutions, and individual families; and many more could be found if a search were made from place to place, by a band of workers like those of Maharastra. If these Persian papers are arranged and published, they will supply a fresh life-story of the northern races and their doings, and supplement or correct

what the sources in Marathi, English and other languages have already yielded. In fact, we should get representative workers in each language and trust them to construct their own story from available sources. In this way, we can get together in the best first-hand manner all the historical past of each community, as presented by their own students. Such separate contributions will ultimately go to form a comprehensive, united and authentic history of India, all from original sources. This is what we have got to do.

There are heaps of British records also, which we Indians ought to study from our own point of view. The East India Company's records have been printed in numerous volumes and are indeed valuable; but they do not supply the kind of information that we need for our own history. The Imperial Records at Calcutta and the Records of the several provincial Secretariats, await research from Indian scholars. These with the Persian and Marathi records will, when carefully worked, give us an acceptable story.

What we just now need most, is records of the type of the printed volumes of the *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* (Imperial Records Office, Calcutta), for the whole Peshwa period, particularly from 1707 to 1772, in which the Maratha influence attained its greatest expansion. It is a great boon that these Persian Calendars have been made available in English. I know it will be an equal boon to non-Maratha students, if some of the most important Marathi papers were to be published in English,

in order that there may be a real interchange of research, between the two main currents of thought and language in India. But the task of rendering Marathi papers into English is well nigh impracticable, as there are already some 300 volumes available in print, of which I have spoken before. It is only recently that some of the universities have taken up Indian history for post-graduate studies; if they had started it long ago, the results would certainly have been by now more encouraging. You will thus see what great need there is for an interchange of thought and discussion, if our national history is to be constructed on sure and scientific foundations.

But such a national history to be full and all-sided, must contain information on all topics, of which politics is only one, although doubtless an important portion. The Marathi papers contain an enormous amount of useful matter about social, religious, literary, military, industrial, judicial and other topics; but unless the main currents of political activities have been determined from beginning to end, these other topics cannot be satisfactorily dealt with. A great deal of discussion has already taken place in Maharastra; and some published books, particularly those of the B. I. Mandal of Poona, contain much information of an all-India character, which will certainly bear translation into English, in order that the other parts of the Indian continent might be enabled to add to or improve upon, what Maharastra has tried to supply. A gentleman of Dhulia once carefully studied the

old judicial papers and decisions and published from them a few useful articles upon the legal administration of the Marathas. Dr. S. N. Sen's *Administrative and the Military Systems of the Marathas*, published under the auspices of the Calcutta University, are admirable pioneering attempts in another direction, although the subjects dealt therein are yet in a crude stage, and require being developed in many essentials, upon which fresh investigation is daily throwing new light.

History in its main object treats of the doings of those great warriors and statesmen who have cut a conspicuous figure in the past, but no national work of the kind could have been accomplished without the willing services and sacrifices of hundreds and thousands of minor persons, possessing more or less ability, and contributing their quota to the main current. Grant Duff and a few other writers of the early 19th century, made only a passing reference to some of the persons and families figuring in Maratha history; but when I began to scrutinize the heaps of papers now available, I found there were very many great and good names whose deeds history must take note of. I have been thus able to present to the readers a fresh account of over a hundred families, of all castes, with their genealogies, dates and other details, so that when fresh names occur in any paper we can identify them at once. I have, besides, tried to bring together all personal and social details of those families and their members, who had played any part in Maratha history, in order that we may be able

to draw some instructive conclusions, as regards the life of society and its working in the days when Maharastra was practically enjoying Swaraj. If all these hundred families and their genealogies were to be carefully examined, one would deduce much useful information from them,—for instance, what the average working life of men of those days was, how far the conditions were favourable to the increase or decrease of population, what kind of education was in vogue, and how it affected the moral and physical well-being of the nation. In this way can our national history be slowly constructed.

In my next lectures I shall proceed to discuss some of the main points established by recent research, in order to bring home to you an idea of the vast extent of the work we have yet to get over, before we are able to produce an acceptable national history of this vast Indian continent.

LECTURE III

SHIVAJI'S CONCEPTION OF A HINDU EMPIRE

1. *Shivaji takes his cue from his father.*

The descent of Shivaji from the solar Sisodia dynasty of Chitor had long been traditionally accepted in Maharastra and has been recently confirmed by the publication in facsimile, of several important Persian sanads held by the present Raja of Mudhol, in the Bijapur district, surnamed Ghorpade. This family of Mudhol and that of the Chhatrapatis of Satara are now proved to have descended from a common ancestor, Sajjansinh, grandson of Rana Lakshmansinh, of Chitor. Sajjansinh migrated to the south about the year 1320 after the terrible havoc wrought upon Chitor by the Pathan Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji. Sajjansinh, his brother Khemsinh and their successors served the rulers of the Bahamani Kingdom and won from them various jagirs at different times, the original deeds of which are now available for study.[1] About the year 1470, two brothers, Karansinh and Shubhakrishna, descendants of Sajjansinh, effected a partition of their landed property; the former, elder, inheriting the southern portion of Mudhol, and the younger,

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1 *Shiwaji the Great*, Vol. I, pt. I, by Dr. Balkrishna.

Shubhakrishna, obtaining the northern portion between Daulatabad and Poona. The Mudhol branch acquired their surname Ghorpade, for having successfully scaled by means of an iguana (*ghorpad*) the walls of Khelna or Vishalgad under the command of Mahmud Gawan, the famous minister of the Bahamani kings. Maloji Bhosle, the grandfather of Shivaji, was about the fifth in descent from the younger branch represented by Shubhakrishna. It would thus seem that there intervened about twelve generations during the three hundred years that elapsed between Sajjansinh and Maloji (1320-1620). The Bhosles and the Ghorpades, having been once separated, followed different fortunes in their respective careers and often manifested deadly enmity against each other during historic times. We know how Baji Ghorpade was prominent in arresting Shahji Bhosle near Jinji and how he was later on killed by Shivaji out of revenge. Like the Bhosles and the Ghorpades, it should be noted, several other Maratha families of the Deccan such as the Pawars, the Jadhavs, the Moreys etc., also claim a Rajput origin.

An enormous mass of old Marathi and Persian papers of pre-Shivaji days which have been recently published, throw considerable light on the early activities of Shivaji and his two immediate ancestors Shahji and Maloji. Shahji served with distinction and valour under Malik Ambar, the able minister of the kings of Ahmadnagar. Malik Ambar taking advantage of the guerilla tactics so admirably suited to the hilly regions of western Deccan and so ably

employed by the Maratha leaders under Bijapur, Golkonda and Ahmadnagar, successfully resisted for a quarter of a century the persistent efforts of Jahangir for extending his empire into the south.

Several scholars have observed a curious fact in these occurrences, that just as Shivaji and Aurangzeb between them created the history of the latter half of the seventeenth century, so did to some extent before them their fathers also in the earlier part of that century. Shahji (1594-1664) and Shah Jahan (1592-1666), contemporaries in age and activity, played a game which was later continued by their sons. Their grandfathers Jahangir and Maloji were the first to find themselves in opposition. Lukhji Jadhaorao commanded an influential position under the Nizam Shah then ruling from Daulatabad and deserted to the Mughals in the early part of the struggle, thereby encountering his son-in-law in open fights more than once. In the battle of Bhatavdi towards the end of 1624 Malik Ambar succeeded with the help of Shahji and other Marathas in inflicting a crushing defeat upon the combined Mughal and Bijapuri armies. The next three years (1624-1627) were full of trouble both for Shah Jahan and Shahji; the former rebelled against his father, wandered all over India to find shelter from his father's armies and for nearly a year remained in secret hiding at Junnar, in the vicinity of which Shivaji was born. During the same period 1625-1627 Shahji, disgusted with the treatment he obtained from Malik Ambar, transferred his allegiance to the Adilshah of Bijapur. Both Ibrahim Adilshah and Jahangir

died in 1627, and when in a few months Shah Jahan acquired his father's throne, he made two important incursions into the south (Jan. 1631—June 1632, and February to June 1636); using all his imperial resources in completing the task of reducing the Deccan. To this aggressive march of the Emperor, Shahji who had left the service of Bijapur, offered a bold and intrepid opposition for seven years (1629-1636), which later served a living object lesson, both in warfare and diplomacy, to his son in undertaking grand projects for winning independence for his race and religion. The terrible experiences and immeasurable sufferings, which Shivaji's shrewd mother Jijabai had to pass through during that period, left an indelible mark upon the tender mind of Shivaji and inspired him with a spirit hardly equalled in the annals of history. Shahji made Poona the centre of his activities, erected there gardens and houses for his residence, and turned to full advantage the peculiar situation created by nature in that hilly tract known as the Mavals or the land of the setting sun, which extended along the two ridges of the Sahyadri range roughly from Junnar and Kalyan in the north to Wai and Raigad in the south. This difficult tract was hardly ever fully brought under an organized peaceful rule by the Bahamani kings or their successors of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur, and being inhabited by turbulent Deshmukhs was something like a no-man's land, a wedge so to say sandwiched between the two kingdoms. Shah Jahan realizing the difficulties of the situation, wisely retraced his steps after having

extinguished the last vestiges of Ahmadnagar* and quietly allowing Shahji to enter the service of Bijapur to carve out for himself a different field of activity in the Karnatak for the rest of his life. It would thus appear that the wonderful career of Shivaji was not a sudden innovation or a wanton eruption like a wild fire of the Sahyadris, as Duff puts it, but a legitimate development of a process first undertaken by Malik Ambar and then ably continued by Shivaji's father whom the contemporary writers have on that account given the appropriate appellation of a kingmaker. Shivaji's achievements viewed in this light would appear to be only a step onward, his mother acting as the connecting link between the father and the son.

2. *Main incidents in Shivaji's career.*

It is just as well that I advert here to the main incidents which made Shivaji a remarkable hero of Maharashtra and perhaps of all India. His early life was full of adventure and audacity. Having been, since his birth, practically separated from his father, Shivaji received the necessary training for life at the hands of his mother and his guardian Dadaji Kondadeo and started his unique career among mountain fastnesses, away from the public gaze, by repairing and capturing old forts and building new ones and reducing to obedience all who defied his authority in his father's jagir. The first significant incident

* The partition treaty is given in Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. I.

which made him a personality to be reckoned with, was his victory over the Moreys of Javli in 1656. Three years after, mainly by cautious strategy, he scored a brilliant success against Afzal Khan, the powerful general of Bijapur and thereby not only struck terror into the hearts of all his rivals but established a reputation as a gifted and intrepid soldier. Within the next four years he baffled the efforts of Aurangzeb's generals Jaswantsinh and Shaista Khan to overcome him, made a friendly compromise with the renowned Mirza Raja Jaysinh, and upon his advice visited the Emperor's court at Agra in 1666. His open hostility to the all powerful Emperor and his miraculous escape from captivity, at once brought him an all-India reputation as an irresistible opponent of the Mughal Empire, inspired by Providence for the deliverance of the Hindus. Thereafter he continued his career of uninterrupted conquest, and in 1674 had himself formally crowned as an independent king, entitled to all the traditional honours of a Kshatriya. During the next six years of his life he extended his dominions to the mouth of the Kaveri and met with a rather sudden and untimely death in 1680, leaving behind him a splendid legacy to his nation as an unequalled conqueror, the creator and inspiring idol of his nation and the last constructive genius among the Hindus.

3. *Influence of Ramdas and other saints.*

As it is necessary for us to understand what the Maratha policy was and how it changed from time to time, we must go back and ascertain from

documentary evidence the original aim of Shivaji when he undertook the task of establishing an independent Maratha kingdom. Whether Shivaji contemplated the establishment of a Hindu empire for all the various peoples of India, or whether he confined his attention only to a small kingdom of his own in Maharastra, is a point on which opinions have differed rather sharply. I should, therefore, like to put down what decision I have been able to come to, on this question, after taking into account the available evidence. From a small *Jagir* of his father confined almost to some two taluks of the present day, *i.e.*, from Junnar to Supa, Shivaji, before his death in 1680, extended his Raj, as I have said, roughly from the west sea to the river Bhima on the east, and from the Godavari in the north to the Kaveri in the south. I have already shown that Shivaji stood forth as the champion of the Hindu religion : it was to protect his religion that he started his campaigns in antagonism to Muslim aggression. In ascertaining the aim of Shivaji, we must take particular note of the surrounding atmosphere in which he was born and bred, and which has been amply reproduced in the contemporary writings of the Indian saints, who spoke politics in terms of religion. These saints had realized that all north India was levelled to the ground under Muhammadan yoke; and the work of regeneration was undertaken by Shivaji in the south, calling himself a champion of Hinduism. Most of these saints had travelled far and wide throughout India and freely mixed with the peoples of different places, had seen and observed the sufferings of the

Hindus, the destruction of the temples, sacred objects and holy places, and, in their own way, freely discussed what measures could possibly be taken to remedy this state of things and defend their religion.

Ramdas, born 20 years before Shivaji and surviving two years after him, started his own independent movement for religious regeneration by establishing Ramdasi *Maths* or convents in various places, and helping in his own way the efforts of political leaders as much as possible. It is said that Ramdas established throughout India in all about 800 *Maths*, of which some 72 have been known as more important. His teachings had great influence right up to the southernmost point of India. In the province of Tanjore in the far south, the sect of Ramdas had a great following, and for 200 years after him, there was a considerable addition to the Marathi literature from this Tanjore section of Ramdas's followers. A number of poems, dictionaries, grammars, dramas, ballads and chronicles, came to be written in Marathi in the province of Tanjore, whose kings themselves were great patrons of learning and took a large personal share in the productions. The results are deposited in the Saraswati Mandir at that town. Ananda-Tanaya and Raghunath Pandit are famous among the Marathi poets of Tanjore, and are known as the followers of Ramdas's teachings. There, on the stone walls of the temple of Brihadishwar, was carved, in the early 19th century, a Marathi inscription in bold, beautiful Devanagri characters, narrating the whole history of the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore, which

is now reproduced in some 130 pages of a book in small print. Such a large historical inscription is nowhere else to be found in the whole world. At the time of Shivaji's death there were in Maharastra about 1200 followers of the Ramdasi cult. This large number of one particular type, working for the uplift of the country, strikes one as a grand creation of Ramdas, influencing the popular mind in shaping the future destiny of Maharastra.

Ramdas's own writings are acute and penetrating and breathe an intense national spirit in every expression. They are comprehensive, dealing with every phase of practical life and meticulously inculcate the virtues of truth, devotion and self-reliance. Styling himself *samarth* or powerful, Ramdas stood for an all round national regeneration and the conservation of the physical and moral resources of the people. They began to assemble in the *Maths* where they were profoundly impressed by the teachings of Ramdas as expounded in his great work, the *Dasa-Bodha*, which is supposed to have led the people to help the national work of Shivaji. They soon imbibed the underlying principles of Shivaji's moves, as day after day they began to be crowned with success. What particular work was entrusted to these *Maths* from the point of view of political propaganda is not definitely on record; and it is even questioned how far Ramdas's teaching actually helped the national uplift. Each *Math* had a temple of Rama and Hanuman with, we presume, several gymnasiums or *akhadas* attached to them, so that the main work of these *Maths* must have been to build up and

his avowed acceptance of the system of the four castes in which he claimed for himself the position of a Kshatriya, all these clearly point to a pan-Hindu ideal which would have been out of place for a small Maratha kingdom confined to the Deccan, possessing more or less the type of one of the branches of the Bahamani Empire.

Thirdly, Shivaji's method of establishing and expanding a small independent kingdom, gives in itself a clue to his future aims, *viz.*, his imposition of the two claims of the *Sardeshmukhi* and the *Chauthai*, of which I am going to speak a little later. The former he claimed from the Emperor Shahjahan as early as 1648, as hereditary *Watan* due to his position as a Sardeshmukh or head territorial officer among the Maratha nation; while the latter he revived about the year 1660 when he conquered the north Konkan, where the kings of Ramnagar used to exact it from the surrounding districts. From the beginning, he skilfully forged these two convenient weapons as a serviceable means to enable his people, in the long run, to establish an all-Hindu empire.

5. *Befriending Hindu princes.*

Fourthly, whenever the Emperor or other Muhammadan kings were at war with Shivaji, he took care to differentiate between his various opponents. He never fought, as a rule, Hindu generals of the Emperor. He tried to be friendly to Jashvantsinh and openly won over Jaysinh, both Rajputs of high descent, to whom Shivaji showed

great regard. A letter in Persian verse, supposed to have been written by Shivaji to Jaysinh has been published by Babu Jagannath Das in the *Nagari-Pracharini Patrika*. It purports to mention Shivaji's objects in clear and emphatic terms. Even if the authenticity of the letter be questioned, we may presume it gives us a faithful idea conveyed in poetical vein, of what the general impression prevailing at the time was, as regards the venture undertaken by Shivaji in opposing the Emperor. It also reflects the actual state of things at the time. "O Great King," says Shivaji in the letter, "though you are a great Kshatriya, you have been using your strength to increase the power of the dynasty of Babar. You are shedding the blood of the Hindus, in order to make the red-faced Muslims victorious. Do you not realize that you are thereby blackening your reputation before the whole world? If you have come to conquer me, I am ready to lay down my head in your path; but since you come as the Deputy of the Emperor, I am utterly at a loss to decide how I should behave towards you. If you fight on behalf of the Hindu religion, I am ready to join and help you. You are brave and valiant; it behoves you as a powerful Hindu prince, to take the lead against the Emperor. Let us go and conquer Delhi itself. Let us shed our costly blood to preserve our ancient religion and give satisfaction to our thirsty ancestors. If two hearts can combine, they will break down any amount of hard resistance. I bear no enmity to you and do not wish to fight with you. I am ready to come and meet you alone.

I will then show you the secret letter which I have snatched out of the pocket of Shayista Khan. If you do not accept my terms, my sword is ready."

Similarly one Ratnakar Bhatt, almost a contemporary of Shivaji, has composed a Sanskrit poem describing the kings of Jaipur, in which he thus writes about Mirza Raja Jaysinh (1621-1667) whom Aurangzeb had employed to subjugate Shivaji. "Mirza Raja,"* says the author, "displayed great valour in conquering Shivaji and other kings who desired to *capture the imperial seat of Delhi.*" Many have taken this as a contemporary impression of Shivaji's aspirations.

I have no time to quote many such letters here: one written by Shivaji to Emperor Aurangzeb on the subject of the Jazia is very eloquent, and can be read in translation in Prof. Sarkar's *Shivaji*. Shivaji's letters to his brother and his letter to Maloji Ghorpade clearly set forth the objects he was trying to attain and must convince all doubters about the sincerity of his purpose. They contain sentiments which eminently establish Shivaji's object of the *Hindu-pad-Padshahi*. His brother Vyankoji held himself to be a subordinate and jagirdar of the Adilshah of Bijapur, which Shivaji would not tolerate. He would not allow Vyankoji to be either independent or subordinate to Bijapur, as his scheme of a Hindu empire would not brook an independent rival. That is why Shivaji had to lead an expedition against

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* येन श्रीजयसिंहेन दिल्लीन्द्रपदलिप्सवः ।
शिवप्रभृतिभूपाला वशं नीताः स्वतेजसा ॥
—ग्रंथमाला, राजवाडे मं लेख, जयपुर वंशावळ.

Vyankoji, and humble him into obedience. He offered Vyankoji a jagir in the Deccan. Writes he to his brother: "God out of His grace has assigned me a mission. He has entrusted to me an all-India empire (*Sarva-bhauma Rajya*). He has given me the strength to crush the Muslims, whose shelter you have sought. How can you succeed against me, and how can you save the Muslims? If you follow my advice, well and good; if not, you will surely have to repent." In his letter to Maloji Ghorpade Shivaji says: "I have formed a league of all Maratha chiefs with the object of preserving their estates, in order that we should be masters in our own home: that we should preserve or destroy Muslim kingdoms at our pleasure. My effort is solely directed towards bringing all the Marathas together and making them strong. Why are you so much in love with the foreign Bijapur kingdom? It is already reduced to dust. What can the Bijapur king give you, and why do you parade your loyalty to a Muslim king? That Pathan is not going to benefit you in any way. We Marathas have already swallowed them up. You must remember that you are a Maratha, and that my object is to unite and raise you all into a strong nation."

It is doubtless clear that Shivaji had in his vision the old Kshatriya races and their achievements in northern India. The Bundela king Chhatrasal was his friend, and came to the Deccan to seek his advice. Northern bards and poets specially came to Shivaji's court and received his patronage. All this points to the all-India character of Shivaji's undertaking.

6. *All-India travel and experience.*

Fifthly, Shivaji himself visited northern India, when he went to meet the Emperor at Agra. He purposely undertook this visit and had no compulsion for it from the Emperor. He utilized the occasion in studying the situation in the far north and the imperial capital. Before starting, he coolly weighed the pros and cons of the undertaking with Jaysinh. In his interview with that prince, Shivaji had come to form certain plans which his movements thereafter confirm. Shivaji did strongly wish to see for himself what the Emperor and his court were like, wherein their strength lay, and how he should thereafter deport himself so as to encompass them. To realize this fully, he made up his mind to proceed to the Emperor's court. His marvellous escape from the imperial custody is too well-known to be repeated here. On his return journey from Agra he visited Mathura, Brindavan, Ayodhya, Prayag, Benares and other holy places. Returning home after an absence of eight months, he had utilized the interval in seeing the whole country, talking to all kinds of people, and gaining valuable experience, of which he made full use afterwards. This shows that Shivaji's plan included an all-India movement. This does not, of course, mean that he wished at once to have himself crowned as the Emperor of Delhi: that was impossible then. But his idea was ultimately to establish a Hindu empire of suzerain power for all India, gradually expanding it from its original base in the Deccan. Had he lived long enough, one feels sure, he would have achieved his object.

7. *Measures for uniting Maratha elements.*

There are many other points of minor importance, contained in the papers of those times, which confirm the view I have taken. His trip to Golconda, his conquest of the Karnatak, and his expedition to Tanjore against his brother,—are simply links in the grand unifying chain of imperial aims, which become clear when the links are properly arranged. Shivaji always took care to win over his own Deccani Marathas such as the Jedhes and the Bandals, with affectionate sympathy and goodwill. He did not hesitate, however, to inflict severe punishments on those who, like the Moreys, dared to oppose his aims. He married eight wives with a set purpose, and not out of mere whim or pleasure. In those days of social inequalities, he contracted these marriage connections in order to link together by matrimonial alliances many Kshatriya families of the Deccan, as the Bhosles were by no means considered at the time high enough in popular estimation. Bajaji Nimbalkar, who had been compelled to accept the Muslim faith by the Adilshah, was re-admitted to Hinduism by Shivaji, who then gave his own daughter in marriage to Bajaji's son. Of all Maratha families the Moreys were the only ones whom he handled rather severely; otherwise, he fought with no Hindu general and made friends with Hindu statesmen at foreign courts, such as Madanna and Akanna of Golconda. It must, however, be clearly understood that although Shivaji's highest aim was to uphold the Hindu religion, he had no ill feeling towards the Muhammadans as a religious

community or towards Muslim kingdoms, if they would accept his suzerainty. He considered himself a protector of all faiths and sects, and treated all of them equally. He, as we know, gave *Inam* lands and annuities to Muslim shrines and institutions. He revered the saint Baba Yakut of Kelsi as much as he did Ramdas. He had faithful Muhammadans in his own service, occupying high posts of trust and honour, like Kazi Haidar whom Aurangzeb afterwards appointed as Chief Justice at Delhi. When he was a captive of the Emperor at Agra, his life was saved by a Muhammadan *Faras* (bed-servant) named Madari Mehtar. His principal naval officer was a Mussalman named Sidi Misri. He took the help of all and had places for all in his service, irrespective of religion.

8. *Aurangzeb's correct estimate of the danger.*

And lastly, the best evidence of Shivaji's aims is supplied by Emperor Aurangzeb himself. Why did such a shrewd and wise Emperor spend the best part of his life and all his imperial resources in the conquest of the Deccan? One cannot say that he was acting thoughtlessly or in a chimerical fashion. Aurangzeb clearly saw the danger to his empire. He well knew Shivaji's aims. He was convinced that Shivaji aimed a blow at the empire itself. That is the reason why, as soon as he learnt that Shivaji was dead, he came down to finish the matter once for all. That it proved futile is a different matter. But that wise Emperor's policy clearly proves the aims which Shivaji had formed.

and which his successors persistently tried to accomplish long after his death.

9. *The War of Independence.*

I need not detain you long over the period that elapsed between the deaths of the two great creators of Maratha history, I mean, Shivaji and Aurangzeb. This period, while it has on the one hand shed the brightest lustre on the Maratha name, has also, on the other hand, given rise to that pernicious system known as the *saranjami*, which Shivaji had studiously put down and which in the end destroyed the homogeneity of the Maratha nation. Shivaji's death was both sudden and premature. His son Sambhaji, although brave and spirited, was not equal to the task of facing the several enemies attacking him at the same time, the principal among whom was Aurangzeb, who came down like an avalanche upon the Maratha Raj. Although Sambhaji waged a most heroic struggle, he was captured and beheaded with cruel indignity. These very misfortunes, however, nerved a band of patriots, Brahmins, Marathas and Prabhus, to unite for the common purpose of defending national liberty. The more famous names among these patriots were Pralhad Niraji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya, Parshuram Trimbak Pratinidhi, Dhanaji Jadhav, Senapati Santaji Ghorpade, Khando Ballal Chitnis, Shankraji Narayan Sachiv and others, presided over by the genial king Rajaram, the younger son of Shivaji. Although working under great disadvantages, these patriots carried on the long war against Aurangzeb

prosperous: if we happen to get a bad ruler or a nonentity at our head, we decline. "If good, so much the better; if evil, tyrannical and oppressive, they must needs submit and wait until the tyranny was overpassed." So long as Shivaji was living, the whole nation supported and obeyed him; the moment he was gone and affairs fell into the hands of his degenerate son, the whole nation was at his mercy for weal or woe. His second son Rajaram, in later days, allowed full scope to his ministers and generals, who, having been trained under Shivaji, possessed exceptional capacity which enabled the nation to wage a successful war with the most tenacious of the Mughal emperors. Things took an altogether different turn at the return of Shahu after Aurangzeb's death, and constituted, what we can call a complete transformation in Maratha policy from its original plan which it is my purpose now to explain.

11. *Chauthai, its origin and purpose.*

One very useful instrument of a political character, which Shivaji wisely forged and himself brought into practice, was his system of levying impositions on an enemy country known as *Chauthai* and *Sardeshmukhi*, the former being of the nature of a tribute exacted from hostile or conquered territories, and the latter a kind of revenue ownership, that is, *Watan* as they called it, which the leaders of the Maratha bands claimed as their own in the old Bahamani days, and which they never ceased to exact in later times. The practice of exacting Chauth, *i.e.*, one-fourth

of the estimated revenue, is supposed, on fresh evidence recently published, to have existed in the western parts of India long before the days of Shivaji. Prof. Pissurlencar of Goa, and Dr. Surendra Nath Sen of Calcutta, after examining the Portuguese archives there, have published papers dating 1595, 1604—1606, and 1634, showing that the Raja of Ramnagar in north Konkan exacted this Chauth from the Portuguese possession of Daman, on the ground that those territories used to pay the Chauth to the kings of Ramnagar, before they passed into the hands of the Portuguese [1]. The practice was quickly taken up by Shivaji and was applied by him to the territories and principalities, which he overran or subjugated, guaranteeing, in return for the payment, immunity from any more exactions on his own part, and security from molestation by any other power. This practice of levying Chauth on foreign territories either fully or partially conquered, or often merely overrun, proved a ready instrument in the hands of Shivaji's successors and enabled them to expand their power to the distant quarters of India. During the critical and confused times that followed the capture of Sambhaji by Aurangzeb, this practice of levying Chauth proved a useful measure to the various leaders of roving Maratha bands, and enabled them to resist the Emperor successfully. It is in this measure, coupled with the system of guerilla tactics, that we can trace the

[1] See Dr. Sen's *Military History of the Marathas* wherein the subject has been fully treated.

subtle influence of Maratha power, which began slowly to eat into the vitals of the Mughal Empire. It will be worth our while to look a little more closely into the subject, and fully grasp the various factors existing in the situation of Maharastra, in order to understand the changes in the Maratha constitution, that took place later on, that is, during the latter days of Aurangzeb's invasion and at the time of his death.

12. *Love of the Maratha Deshmukhs for their patrimony.*

The Marathas have been described as by nature very jealous of their *Watans* or lands inherited from ancestors, for which they had often paid dearly even with their lives. When during the Bahamani rule or perhaps even earlier, the country of Maharastra was settled and brought under cultivation, the inducement offered to the various Maratha families was the grant of *Watan* lands in perpetuity. The hilly sloping country of the Western Ghats, known in history as the Mavals, or the land of the setting sun, was first cleared of forests and wild animals, and made habitable by several immigrant Kshatriyas now known by the common appellation of the Mavalas, whom later Shivaji subdued and turned into helpmates, mainly by stratagem and occasionally by the sword, but who in the beginning acted as small independent rulers of the tracts which they owned as Deshmukhs, meaning heads of the *Desh*, or feudal landlords, as we can style them. The Moreys, the Shirkes, the Dalvis, the Jedhes, the Jadhavs,

the Nimbalkars, the Khopdes and others, who all figure so prominently in the early activities of Shivaji, were hereditary Deshmukhs or Watandars, whose duty it was to colonize and settle and populate the country, so as to make it yield revenue to Government. The process was long and troublesome, involved a tremendous cost of life, labour and money, and naturally created intense love and interest in the owners' mind for the land which they served and improved from generation to generation. The Government of the country granted these Maratha adventurers periodical leases and immunity from taxation. When the lands came to be finally improved and became capable of yielding an annual revenue, the work of collection was entrusted to these same Deshmukhs, who were asked to pay 90% of the estimated revenue to Government, keeping for themselves the remaining 10% as a reward for their labours. This share of 10% came to be called Sardeshmukhi and was, in essence and origin, a constant source of hereditary income, which all Maratha sardars from the Chhatrapati down to the smallest holder claimed as their ancestral patrimony, and which they most jealously guarded and preserved, even at the risk of life. Readers of Maratha history may remember how Chhatrapati Shahu strictly and rigidly reserved for himself this 10% charge of the Sardeshmukhi dues, when his Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath obtained from the Sayyads, imperial sanads of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in the year 1718, and how he distributed the proceeds of the latter among his various favourites and the persons who

had helped him in his difficulties. The Bhosles themselves were originally Sardeshmukhs on a par with the Jadhavs and Moreys, although they succeeded in establishing an independent Maratha kingdom later on. This nature of Sardeshmukhi deserves to be clearly noted as distinct from that of the Chauth, a different item altogether, which was mainly designed for subjugating foreign territory, and which had the nature of a tribute.

The Maratha Deshmukhs had thus vested interests in the lands of the Deccan for centuries before the rise of Shivaji, and were practically independent of the ruling authorities, who could chastise them only if they failed to pay the Government revenue. The precarious and adventurous life which for a long time they led in the Maval lands, has been reflected in the plentiful old papers, which have been lately discovered and published, mainly by Rajwade in those of his volumes, which deal with the Shivaji period, *i.e.*, 15 to 18, 20 and 22. Disputes about rights and possession, about heirs and succession, about thefts and robberies, murder and molestations of various kinds, which were so numerous and acute for about a century before the rise of Shivaji and which have been fully described in those papers, supply a clear idea about the state of the country at the time and the manner in which Shivaji utilized them to his own advantage. Shivaji, shrewd as he was in estimating the inherent capacity of these Mavalas, found in them ready material for his nation-building activities. The strength and energy of these Maval Deshmukhs, were till then

being entirely wasted in internecine disputes and family feuds, making murder, arson, waylaying and other crimes, matters of common occurrence, which the distant rulers of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar could hardly check or stop, owing to the difficult and impassable nature of the country and the turbulent spirit of the people. In fact, Shivaji's father Shahji had already enlisted the sympathies of some of these Maval Deshmukhs, in his wars against the onrushing Mughals, leaving the completion of his task to his astute son Shivaji. The Jedhes and the Bandals who were in Shahji's employ, continued to help his son Shivaji, when he started his national work in Maharastra, and after his father had transferred his own field of activity to the distant south. Of the Maval Deshmukhs the Moreys happened to be by far the most powerful and influential in the service of Bijapur, and having resisted the early activities of Shivaji, came into direct conflict with him and brought upon themselves severe chastisement at his hands. In accounting for the rapid and phenomenal success of Shivaji, we must take note of this turbulent spirit of Maval Deshmukhs and their intense love for their original patrimony. In the latter days of Maratha rule, we often notice how the Sindias of Gwalior, the Pawars of Dhar, or the Gaikwads of Baroda, jealously guarded their small hereditary Watans or Deshmukhis in the Deccan, even when they had created extensive kingdoms for themselves outside in Malwa and Gujerat. The *Saranjami* system introduced by the Peshwas, it will be seen later, is based on this

love of the Marathas for their hereditary lands in the Deccan.

13. *Origin of Sardeshmukhi and Saranjami.*

To understand the real nature of Sardeshmukhi, we must study the structure and practices of the village government obtaining in Maharastra from the profuse materials which have been published in the form of the legal decisions of the disputes of those times. The *Watan* claims have been of various kinds. The *Patel* or *Patil* is the headman of the village, looking after all its concerns and the *Kulkarni* is his writer who keeps the village records. The Patel and the Kulkarni used to have land assignments for their services, *i.e.*, also *Watans* in a certain sense. Patvaris and Pandes, Goudas and Nadgoudas are merely provincial synonyms of the Patel and the Kulkarni, the first two being used in the Central Provinces, and the last two in the Kanarese country in the south. *Desai* is the corruption of the Sanskrit term *Desha-swami*, or possibly *Desha-pati*, also styled Desh-mukh. The *Sardeshmukh* stands above several Desais or Deshmukhs, *i.e.*, looking after a group of several villages. *Saranjami* in later times came to mean land assignment given for military service: the word *Saranjam*, which means provision, occurs in the papers of Shivaji's time. When a title or a mark of honour, such as a horse, an elephant, or a palanquin was bestowed by the king upon his deserving servants or subjects, it was supposed to carry with it a provision for its maintenance, *viz.*, the *Saranjam*. In later times,

however, this word came to mean provision for military service only, for employing and maintaining troops to fight the battles of Government; those holding landed Saranjams of this nature are styled Saranjamdars, who date their rise particularly from the times of Shivaji's son Rajaram and who were chiefly instrumental in the later expansion of Maratha power at the hands of the Peshwas. In popular language the words Saranjam and Jagir mean nearly the same thing. The present Rajas and Maharajas such as those of Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Dhar, Dewas in Central India, or of Miraj, Sangli, Jamkhindi and Ramdurg in the south, were all Saranjamdars of a certain type, with definite rules and regulations about their service, which we find amply illustrated in the *Peshwas' Diaries* printed from the Poona Daftar particularly in the volumes referring to Madhav Rao I. As this system of Saranjamdars with many fresh Maratha capitals from which their rule radiated, has come to be known as the particular creation of the Peshwas and has often been held more or less responsible for the fall of the Marathas, it is necessary to understand its exact origin and nature in the constitution of the Maratha kingdom. As the subject is complicated and not properly grasped by the average student, I am trying to explain it purposely at such length.

Shivaji was deadly against assigning lands in perpetuity for any purpose whatsoever, and stopped the old practice with a firm hand, often confiscating all lands and jagirs which had been made over to generals during preceding regimes, and substituting cash

payment for them. Rajwade's volumes dealing with the Shivaji period are full of papers which show how Shivaji laid his hand on all lands which had been given away. He clearly realized the disadvantages of the system of creating feudal lords. In those days of unrest and confusion, it was difficult, particularly on account of the absence of good roads and means of communication, to exercise strict control over military leaders enjoying feudal jagirs. They often rebelled against authority, openly joined the enemy, invariably neglected to keep efficient troops for service, and tried to accumulate money and power at the expense of the State, more or less after the fashion of feudalism in Europe. Although of course the allurement of landed jagirs succeeded for a time in securing conspicuous service and daring from soldiers and their leaders, their successors were not necessarily as brave, willing and faithful, in their service and claimed to enjoy their patrimony without giving an adequate return to the State. One who acquired the jagirs for the first time, must have been a fit person deserving the reward for the service and sacrifice which he had rendered to the State; but his successors usually proved quite unfit; if they were dispossessed of their holdings, they became disaffected and troublesome to the State in a hundred ways. Shivaji very early in his career fully realized the disadvantages of the system, and paid all kinds of service in ready cash, with which he was ever careful to keep himself well supplied. He even confiscated lands given to various religious institutions or charities, and substituted cash payment for them.

But this wise policy had to be discontinued after Shivaji's death, owing to a combination of adverse circumstances to which I must now refer. The powerful Emperor Aurangzeb descended upon Maharastra in 1683, with a huge and well-equipped army, determined to complete the task of subjugating the Deccan, begun by his three illustrious predecessors, and put into the field the vast resources of his extensive empire to attain his object. The very names of the generals who served under him, would have struck terror into any people he proposed to conquer. In a short time he annexed the two kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, captured and killed the Maratha King Sambhaji, taking into captivity his wife and son, and nearly accomplishing his grand purpose with one stroke. It was in the midst of such a depressing situation, that Shivaji's second son Rajaram started his work of saving his nation, by catching at any and every means that came ready to his hand, working also the system of Chauthai for extending the Maratha power. How he obtained adherence to his cause, can be well understood from the following typical letter written by Rajaram in July 1696 to Sadashiv Naik, the ruler of Sunda, a small state to the south-east of Goa. The letter was written from Jinji, when the Emperor was threatening to conquer not only the Marathas, but also other more or less independent states and territories throughout south India. Thus runs the letter: "We are glad to have received your letter and the messages which you sent with your two trusted agents Konherpant and Rayaji

Rukhmangad, who have communicated and explained to us all the details of the negotiation in connection with your offer of mutual help and perpetual friendship in our present situation. We have considered the proposal fully in conference with our ministers Shankaraji Pandit Sumant and Nilo Krishna, and are glad, as requested by you, to commit this agreement to writing, and send it on to you with our solemn oath for its observance on our part, and trust you will do the same on yours.

"Your proposal was that the territory of the Panch-Mahals with all its forts and places, should be assigned to you and your successors in perpetuity, in return for a yearly tribute of 22,200 Hons (Rs. 78,000), an amount which you are at present paying to Muhammadan rulers. We accept this proposal; undertake to vanquish the Muhammadans and protect you from them or from any other enemies that will molest you. When your enemies will be so vanquished, you must regularly pay the amount of tribute to us from year to year. Moreover, you must also carry on an aggressive war with the Muhammadans, and we vouchsafe to you the fresh territory you will be able to conquer from the enemy on payment by you to us, of the customary tributes assigned to those territories, in recognition of our suzerain power. Whenever you would be threatened or molested by any outsider, our forces shall at once run to your help and win peace and safety for you. Thus shall we continue ever to remain friendly with your State, and in token of our solemn promise to that effect, we send you separately *bilva* leaves and

flower garlands of Mahadeva and bread. We trust you will accept these and continue to increase the solemn friendship ever hereafter —."*

When Rajaram retired from Maharastra to Jinji, there was no money in his treasury. Raigad, the capital of the Maratha kingdom, was in the hands of the Emperor. There were no Maratha army and no government. It was only the undaunted brains of a few clever supporters of Rajaram, warriors and statesmen, that rose to the occasion and invented means and appliances in order to save the situation as best they could. The Emperor, on the other hand, kept a full watch over the measures and activities of his opponents and did his best to seduce the Maratha fighters, by offering them all possible inducements to join his army and fight the fugitive Chhatrapati. He granted Inams and jagirs to those Maratha leaders who had been persecuted by Sambhaji and thereby managed to weaken the Maratha cause immensely. In these adverse circumstances Rajaram and his advisers were compelled to offer, on their part also, the same inducements to their helpers, in order to retain their services and allegiance. I might here give a sample of what Rajaram wrote to the Maratha leaders: "We note with pleasure that you have preserved the country and served the King loyally. You are highly brave and serviceable. We know that you hold Inam lands from the Emperor, but that you are *now* ready to forsake him and fight for us and suffer hardships for us

* D. V. Apte's *Itihasa-Manjari*, p. 131.

and our nation. The Emperor has created a havoc in the land. He has converted Hindus wholesale to his creed. Therefore, you should cautiously conduct measures of safety and retaliation and keep us duly informed of your services. If you do not swerve from loyalty and if you help the State in its present sore extremity, we solemnly bind ourselves to continue your hereditary holdings to you and your heirs and successors." In this way, letters and sanads granting Inams and jagirs began to pour from the Maratha court in an unbroken current. The main purport of them was, that the Maratha bands should roam anywhere and everywhere, plunder the imperial treasure and territory, and harass the enemy in all possible ways. These sanads were nothing but promises of future reward, assuring the military leaders that they would be considered owners of the territory they would subjugate in any quarter of India. This game became profitable for a time to the roving Maratha bands; they borrowed money, raised troops and carried on expeditions to distant parts. The process gave a sudden impetus to the business of banking and fighting. Let me quote only one instance. Ramchandra Pant, the great Amatya of Rajaram, recommends to his master the services of one Patankar in a letter which runs thus: "These Patankars own hereditary *Watans*. They have undertaken to raise 5,000 troops and will be styled Pancha-sahasri. This kingdom belongs to gods, Marathas and Brahmins; the Patankars have undergone terrible hardships in crushing the armies of

the enemy. In this task they have not only spent all they had, but also contracted huge debts. Therefore, their sacrifices deserve to be adequately rewarded, and so we shall allow them the following 12 villages in perpetual *Inam*." Requests for similar *Inams* and rewards began to pour in thousands before the Maratha administrators of the day. They particularly bring their fivefold service to the notice of the Chhatrapati. They say: (1) "We have not joined the Mughals; (2) we have managed to carry on cultivation; (3) we pay revenue to Government; (4) we have employed large forces to protect the country from robbers and raiders, and, in addition (5) we fight the battles of the Chhatrapati at the risk of our lives." This is not all. They also repeat the inducements that the Emperor had offered them, and demand something better from their own kings, saying to the Chhatrapati, "We, your own kith and kin, should not at least fare worse than strangers who come and obtain handsome rewards from the Emperor." We thus clearly see how the system of Jagirs and military *Saranjams*, so sternly put down by Shivaji, came to be revived once more, and how it took deep root during the long and confused period of the Emperor's campaigns in the Deccan. In fact the confusion created by the numerous indiscriminate grants of *Inams* was so great, that Rajaram on his return from Jinji to Satara, found that one and the same district was claimed by several persons at once, and he had therefore to appoint a special court of enquiry to adjust all claims of land *Watans* and revoke or confirm them

on certain fixed principles. When Rajaram died in 1700, and his queen Tara Bai managed the Government for the next few years, she tried her best to stop the practice of granting new *Saranjams*, and even to cancel some of those that had been already given. She and her advisers were fully aware how the departure from the healthy regulations of Shivaji was leading the kingdom towards ultimate ruin, but were unable, under the stress of circumstances and for mere self-protection, to stop the practice which by prescription had become hardened for years.

14. *Perversion of the original object.*

It soon became very difficult for the central Government to keep these jagirdars in proper check and exact discipline and service from them. They even alienated their own Inam lands within their sphere, to whomsoever they pleased. I give a sample here of the sanads issued by the Chhatrapati in answer to the clamorous petitions that poured constantly for *Inams*: they run thus :—

" At such and such a place you came to His Highness the Chhatrapati with a request that your ancestors had been serving the State in succession for a long time. That you yourself also wish to serve loyally and faithfully ever hereafter; that you have a large family, and that His Highness should out of kindness provide for its maintenance. Taking this request of yours into kind consideration, His Highness has been pleased to grant such and such a village as *Inam* in perpetuity to you, your

heirs and successors. We enjoin on all our successors, on oath, that this *Inam* should not be taken back." Such requests evidently mean that what was granted first for hazardous and faithful service, was claimed by the successors for mere maintenance and enjoyment of a large family of idlers, who rendered no service to Government and claimed gratuitous reward. This habit of enjoying land assignments without personal fitness and without giving any labour in return, sapped the very foundations of public service and even the morals of society itself. The Brahmins continued to extract any sum from one rupee to a lac and more from Government, who had assumed the pleasing role of protecting Brahmins and cows, for no other visible service than the questionable one of performing religious rites and showering blessings upon the King and the State for their success and well-being. It was a beggary of the very worst type, giving prominence to birth, heredity and prescriptive rights, leaving no room to Government for the recognition of fresh merit and individual capacity. All the Maratha State came to be alienated in this way. Those who served and sacrificed themselves, and those who did not, came to be put on the same level. This was the greatest defect of the *Saranjami* system, which in no small degree contributed to the ruin of the structure so cleverly created by Shivaji.

It is also interesting to trace how all these defects came to be perpetuated under the conditions that then prevailed. During the confusion and weakness that overtook the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb's

death, many proud and ambitious Maratha leaders roamed about the country, and took possession of whatever territories they could lay their hands on; but this conquest was by no means homogeneous like the Raj of Shivaji, which he had conquered by means of armies paid by himself and directly controlled by him. The various Maratha leaders of the later days, were not subject to the control of one single power and were scattered units having no cohesion. The astute Amatya Ramchandra Pant tried to control them to some extent, but they often proved recalcitrant, looking to their own selfish interests and being ever ready to join the enemy, if better prospects were offered them. If Ramchandra Pant had tried to exact stricter discipline from them, they would in all probability have openly accepted the Mughal service. Owing to these difficulties the Marathas could not gradually build up a solid constitution by degrees, as did the British in their own country. It must, however, be borne in mind that such a comparison is often pointless, as we have not before us all the facts of the situation. Many problems of history can be rightly solved, if we have a proper conception of the surroundings and circumstances affecting them. We can know very well, why the Government founded by Shivaji did not last long after him and how the system built up by the Peshwas differed entirely from Shivaji's original conception. So, no hard and fast constitution could in those days be thought of, when there were many disturbing elements facing the workers on all sides.

One reason why the system of creating jagirs or military commands at different places all over

the country, became absolutely necessary during the Peshwas' days, was that there were no military roads for rapid communication and movement of armies, from the central seat of Government to any threatened point. During Shivaji's days the central Mughal Government was powerful and he dared not cross the Nerbudda for any ambitious project beyond; Shivaji had to remain satisfied with whatever he could achieve in Maharastra proper and in the farthest south. But after Aurangzeb's death, there was a general scramble for conquest and power, in which even the western nations began to take a part. If the Peshwas had confined their efforts to the south only, the Rajputs and provincial governors and local chiefs of the north would, in all probability, have established independent rulerships, which it would have cost the Peshwas more effort and expense to conquer, when they attempted to accomplish the ideal of *Hindu-pad-Padshahi*. So, having realized that the time was opportune for carrying out that ideal, upon the death of Aurangzeb, the leaders assembled and took counsel together at the court of Shahu, and with his permission, formed plans of conquest, divided the spheres of activity between the various workers and started on their mission, with no clear cut plan or regulations to guide or bind them together. The idea was to choose a centre for military control, and establish there permanent Maratha settlements, with strong family interests, a method by which the country soon became dotted with small Maratha capitals, each with a wall or castle and having a sufficient establishment for military and revenue

purposes. In its original conception and outline, the system had no inherent defects; and had there been provision for sufficient check from the central Government and no tendency to insubordination on the part of the executors, it would have worked well; in fact it did work satisfactorily so long as the controlling authority at the capital was strong, and so long as there was no competition against European powers of superior organization and armament. Thus, the *Saranjami* system supplied the want of good military roads from Satara and Poona to the various centres outside, which it was not possible for the Peshwas to build in a short time and with the scanty resources which they possessed. Even before the leaders started on an expedition, or what is called *muluk-giri* in technical language, they tried to obtain *sanads* for jagirs for the territories which they proposed to invade. The advent of Shahu did not improve matters. The Peshwas did try to reduce to obedience the older ministers and leaders of Shivaji's days; but in order to accomplish this, they had to create new sardars of their own, like the Sindias and the Holkars, who later imitated their predecessors and in their own turn resented control from the weaker Peshwas. If the Peshwas had attempted to enforce stricter discipline, they would not have succeeded in accomplishing even what they did. In fact, the India of the 18th century, with the weakening of the central Mughal Government, afforded a particularly favourable field to very many ambitious and roving spirits. The provincial governors of the Emperors, such as

LECTURE VI

MAHADJI SINDIA AND NANA FADNIS

1. *Three periods of Maratha history.*

Two men escaped with their lives, under providential guidance, from the fateful field of Panipat, and having soon after risen to exceptional prominence by dint of personal ability and character, became the saviours of the Maratha kingdom almost up to the time of its downfall by the Treaty of Bassein. The Maratha kingdom formally ended in the year 1818: but virtually it lost its independence with the Treaty of Bassein, by which Baji Rao II, as the head of the Maratha State, accepted British supremacy and might perhaps have retained his subordinate position at the capital of Poona, on a par with the present Maharajas of Gwalior, Indore or Baroda, had he possessed the necessary wisdom to steer clear of the difficulties that afterwards arose and to submit willingly and cheerfully to the British overlordship as the others did. We must therefore put down the end of the Maratha kingdom on the last day of the Christian year 1802, and sub-divide our subject accordingly. If I may calculate Shivaji's beginning of Maratha Swaraj somewhere from the middle of the 17th century, say 1653, the period of the first sixty years up to 1713 when the Peshwas' regime started, has on it a clear stamp of Shivaji's

personality and has already been shown to be distinct in character from the next sixty years, 1713 to 1773, when the Maratha power reached its highest expansion due to the exceptional capacity of the first four Peshwas and when the Saranjami system involving feudal military service had its full force. Thereafter comes the period of decline extending over thirty years dating from the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao in 1773 and ending, as I have said, with the Treaty of Bassein in 1802, thus making a total existence of 150 years for the Maratha dominion in India. This last period of 30 years bears a distinct stamp of the two personalities, Balaji Janardan *alias* Nana Fadnis and Mahadji Sindia, of whom I am now going to speak.

There exists a great deal of misconception about the intentions and achievements of these two contemporary characters, not only outside Maharastra but even within it, as the subject, I am afraid, has not hitherto been treated in a proper historical spirit after making use of all the available papers and information. I think it would not be out of place here to give my estimate of them and their work, and with it also an account of the declining stage of Maratha politics, leading logically to my next discourse on the causes of the Maratha downfall. In this way, taking into consideration the division into the three periods mentioned above, I shall have cursorily explained the main characteristics of them all from the beginning. Nana and Mahadji, the one a Brahman and pure statesman, the other a Maratha and soldier-statesman, were

often helpmates, occasionally rivals for power, but both always intensely watchful about the national interests.

2. *Early careers of Mahadji and Nana.*

Mahadji was born about the year 1733 and was therefore 61 years of age at his death in 1794. Nana was 8 years younger, having been born in 1741. Both had full opportunity to observe and study closely the development of Maratha concerns under Peshwa Balaji Rao, and both received much of their initial training under him and rendered conspicuous service to Madhav Rao, to whom they entirely owed their rise and future career and who was able to maintain his position against his uncle mainly through their loyal support. From the beginning Nana and Mahadji were opposed to the policy and ways of Raghoba, who would have sacked them both at any time, if he had the power to do it. It is well known that when the question of succession to Sindia's estate came up for consideration after the disaster of Panipat, where three valiant representatives of that family had lost their lives, Raghoba set aside the claim of Mahadji and appointed one Manaji Sindia known as *Fakde*, a distant relation. But Madhav Rao felt the injustice of this measure, since Mahadji was the only surviving member of Ranoji's large family and fully deserved to succeed to the estate as the direct heir, even though he was an illegitimate son of his father. After Manaji had enjoyed the position for two years, Mahadji was reinstated by Madhav Rao and

naturally felt ever after a great aversion for Raghoba, whom he considered utterly incompetent. Similarly was Nana Fadnis a confidant of Peshwa Madhav Rao who employed him specially to watch and superintend the wily Raghoba, when he was put in confinement after the battle of Dhodap in 1768. Nana had, therefore, to incur the highest displeasure of Raghoba from the beginning. This tension grew into an open rupture after the murder of Narayan Rao, when Nana and Sakharam Bapu formed the great league against the murderer, known in history as the famous *Bara-Bhai* Council, whose object was to set aside Raghoba and conduct the administration, first in the name of Narayan Rao's widow Ganga Bai, and afterwards on behalf of her newly born son known as Savai Madhav Rao. During the twenty years from the birth of this Peshwa in 1774 to 1794, there was a minority administration, which gave Nana and Mahadji the opportunity to prove their ability. They discharged their duty, as we know, with conspicuous success.

The careers of Nana and Mahadji are divided into two main periods by the course of events, the first from 1774 to 83 known as the first Marātha War, and the second 1784-94 when Mahadji, openly giving up the old guerilla tactics, raised a new army on the European model under the direction of De Boigne, —the greatest French general of his time having experience of two wars,—conquered the Rajput princes, captured Delhi, and took the Emperor under his protection after rescuing him from the ignominious atrocities inflicted by Gulam Kadar. Thus

Mahadji attained a high importance and an eminent position in the whole of India, when he returned to Poona with pomp and honours lying thick upon his head, but unfortunately, only to die in his native land shortly after. Nana and Mahadji are the two personalities who preserved the Maratha power after the murder of Narayan Rao, when Raghoba took the help of the British, who were then trying their utmost to encompass India by completing their net round the west coast. Those who have studied the contemporary European history and watched closely the career of Warren Hastings in India, can at once realize how this first Maratha War, synchronizing with the War of American Independence, was affected by foreign politics, since the French navy for a time regained its lost influence and caused serious anxiety to the British in their world-wide complication. As we know, British ambition began to bid for world power in 1756 in the Seven Years' War, at the end of which they established their naval supremacy by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The next ten years was a period of arrested ambition for them, which was rekindled by the murder of the Peshwa at Poona, of which they took full advantage by their wanton aggression in capturing the fort of Thana from the Peshwa's possession at the end of 1774. Next year Nelson visited Bombay, although he was then quite an unknown personality, looking for naval expansion in eastern waters, and possibly imparting part of his zeal to Warren Hastings and other British officials in India. But during the War of American

Independence British ambition received a set-back in all quarters of the globe. The French fleet had become superior to the British for a short time. They therefore wisely curbed their ambition, which became aggressive once more only after the outbreak of the French Revolution. For a proper grasp of Maratha history in this period, the student must keep before his mind's eye the international character of British politics; and the following lines from Sir Alfred Lyall make it clear how Nana and Mahadji saved Maratha independence at this great crisis: "In 1776 a turn of European politics materially affected the situation in India. A French agent reached Poona in 1777, proposing alliance with the Marathas and promising them French help against the English. The Marathas were then and upto nearly the end of the century a match for the English. By the summer of 1780 the fortunes of the English in India had fallen to their lowest watermark. The Marathas were too well-united to be shaken. They held in the centre of India a position which enabled them to threaten all the three divided English Presidencies. The backing given by the English to Raghunathrao turned out a disastrous speculation and ended in ignominious failure. Hyder Ali made a common cause with the Marathas, had drawn the Nizam into the triple alliance which Nana Fadnis had formed against the English. Sindia was fast becoming the most powerful chief of the Maratha Federation. Next year a large French fleet arrived in India under Admiral Suffren than whom France has never had a better admiral. The situation was saved for the

English by news arriving of peace between England and France and the troublesome Maratha War ended, during which the English power in India had some perilous vicissitudes."

3. *How the two leaders won the First Maratha War.*

In the year 1773, of which we are now speaking, the Regulating Act brought all the British Presidencies of India under one united control at Calcutta. Warren Hastings was appointed Governor-General with a council of four members to help him. There occurred open disagreement between them which not a little affected the fortunes of the Marathas. On that account the course of events during the period has become so confused and complicated, that it requires careful study from original materials, both English and Marathi, in order to determine the exact position of Indian affairs and preserve a proper perspective. Had not Nana and Mahadji acted in concert and brought all their resources to bear on this war with the British, there would have been an end of the Maratha power at this juncture. The British had not even a plausible excuse at the time for giving shelter to Raghoba and starting a wanton war, after an heir had been born to the murdered Peshwa. The British should have treated Raghoba as a fugitive and murderer and given him no shelter. They, however, sustained a set-back in America by the loss of their colonies, and had their prestige lowered in their dealings with France. Warren Hastings, by his ambition and aggression estranged the minds of very many chiefs

and potentates in the various parts of India. The Emperor would not trust himself to the British; the Nawab of Oudh and the Raja of Benares had no better opinion of their veracity. The Nizam in the east and Hyder in the south, the Marathas in the west and the Bhosles of Nagpur in the centre, signed a solemn secret treaty of alliance for a joint war against the British. French proposals of naval and military help were openly entertained at Poona, so that Nana's sagacity and foresight made matters so adverse to the British interests, that orders came from Europe for Warren Hastings to stop all wars and restore peaceful relations with the various powers in India. The Treaty of Salbye, first proposed in the autumn of 1781 and ultimately concluded in February 1783, restored peace to India, and freed Maratha arms for completing their previous commitments. This organization of national forces at a critical moment of the country's fortunes and the preservation of Maratha independence from the British aggression have been set down as the greatest achievements of Nana Fadnis, at whose death in 1800 it was universally felt, that all moderation and wisdom vanished from Maratha politics, leaving the field free for the foundation of British supremacy in India.

Mahadji Sindia's services to the Maratha nation are of a different type. His greatest achievements have been put down to be his conquest of the Rajputs, his settlement of the Emperor's affairs, and the creation of armaments on the western scientific method. The valuable experience he had obtained

during seven years of incessant warfare convinced him, that the future enemy of the Maratha nation was to be a western power and that therefore unless they changed their traditional fighting methods, they had no hope of life. He had at the same time to carry out the old Maratha policy of controlling the Emperor's affairs at Delhi and re-establishing Maratha supremacy over the Rajput and other tributary States, which had thrown off their former allegiance during the war with the British. These three tasks occupied Mahadji during the rest of his life of twelve years and at times even brought him to the brink of ruin.

I shall discuss later, why, with all this glowing expansion and success of Maratha arms in all the quarters of India, that power crumbled so easily in the early years of the 19th century. But the seeds of that ultimate decay were, as will be shown in the sequel, more or less sown in the midst of this apparent glory and during the regime of this last politician Nana Fadnis. It is a matter of common knowledge that there ever existed a kind of irritation and rivalry between Nana and Mahadji, the origin and nature of which we must carefully study.

4. *Physical and temperamental differences between the two.*

Since Nana and Mahadji are practically responsible for having made the Maratha history of the last quarter of the 18th century and since they often worked jointly and oftener disagreed also, I think it necessary to probe their character, achievements

and failures deeply. The two differed from each other as much in their physical features as in their mental cast. Nana, a Brahman, tall and thin, brownish in complexion with a long oval face, marked with large piercing eyes and a long nose; the other a Kshatriya, of middle stature, dark, thickset, stout and athletic, a typical Maratha soldier of his time. While Nana was by nature strict and serious, regular and hard working, abstemious in words and action, difficult of approach and never given to sport, mirth or company, hardly ever seen to laugh and of an extremely delicate and thin constitution; Mahadji was, on the other hand, of a jovial and merry temperament, ever surrounded by crowds of people, talking, joking, laughing and enjoying company, taking counsel with all, but always so cautious as to set people entirely on a wrong scent, never to let others fathom his real intentions or plans; in fact, an exact antithesis of Nana. Mahadji is described as sitting in a large tent in the midst of clerks and servants, helpmates and ambassadors, questioning all openly, hearing and dictating correspondence and issuing orders simultaneously. Nana has often taken Mahadji to task for not keeping his counsels secret and for discussing important state matters in an open assembly. People, including even his near relatives and immediate servants, were afraid of approaching Nana. He was exacting and strict in his punishments, would see and talk to only one person at a time, except rarely when there was an open discussion or conference previously arranged.

Even Haripant Phadke, Nana's best friend, would consult Nana's whim before he approached him with any proposal or suggestion. In one particular point of common occurrence, the contrast between Nana and Mahadji was most vivid. Under the greatest of disasters, Màhadji was cool and composed never showing his innermost trepidation to anybody. When the news of severe reverses or decimation of his large forces reached him, he could be seen laughing and joking as usual, as if nothing had happened. This unperturbed intrepidity and cool decision carried him successfully through trials and embarrassments which would break the spirit of any ordinary man. Nana was timorous and excitable, often unable to conceal his confusion when difficult problems demanded immediate solution. First Sakharam Bapu, and later Haripant Phadke always helped to compose Nana's disturbed temperament and hearten him in the midst of perilous situations. But, unlike Mahadji, Nana was usually reasonable and fair in his dealings, afraid to commit treachery or wrong, strict and punctual in carrying out his word, not over-inclined to liberality and as a rule impatient of results. He did not possess the self-sufficiency of Mahadji, but took counsel with all separately and acted according to a considered judgment of his own. Mahadji on the other hand was patient and courageous, brilliant under reverses, shifting and calculating, often irascible in temper, ever inclined to pick up the weaknesses of others and make the best use of them, as we know from his dealings with Nana, Raghoba, Sakharam Bapu,

or Tukoji and Ahalya Bai Holkar. He showed a friendly spirit to all, but would not be over-scrupulous in keeping his word or doing a wrong act if it suited his purpose.

He can be called a great statesman, in whom even his enemies could put their faith. Lacking the generous heart of Balaji Rao or Madhav Rao, Nana Fadnis was not at all loved like them. Being a stern taskmaster, he could hardly expect love from others; nay, he was often in danger of assassination and has himself mentioned some twenty occasions on which he had a miraculous escape from attempts on his life, which never was the case with any of the Peshwas before. Nana's rigorous system of spying often made it impossible for him to distinguish between friends and foes, so that his own trusted servants like Ghasi Ram Kotwal or Balvant Rao Nagnath who possessed his backing, did not scruple to gain their own selfish ends. Indeed, the atmosphere of Poona for the 8 or 10 years after Narayan Rao's murder, remained intensely surcharged with uncertainty and suspicion in a degree quite unbearable even to those who had no concern with state affairs. Life and property were felt to be quite insecure.

Nana lacked military leadership, while Mahadji lacked the aptitude for desk-work or for accounts and attention to details, matters in which Nana was a master hand. In fact, the records of Nana Fadnis were said to be so typically arranged in his days that they showed his inexhaustible capacity for labour and precision. A long mutilated paper

extant in Nana's own hand has been printed in the *K. S. Patren Yadi*, which contains half-finished directions and arrangements, relating to the grand ceremony of the young Peshwa's marriage in February 1783, and shows how careful Nana was of the minutest detail, as he mentions, for instance, numerous courses and articles of food that were to be got ready for each day and for different occasions, with minute instructions how they should be arranged and served. Mahadji was not so exact, and was often cheated by unscrupulous subordinates and employees, whom he then visited with relentless vengeance. These differences although only temperamental in the beginning, became accentuated later on and for a time affected Maratha politics throughout India. Nana was strong in statesmanship and Mahadji in military matters; when they acted in mutual concert and enjoyed each other's confidence, they produced the greatest effect; but they often felt jealous of each other and pursued independent courses which certainly affected the Maratha fortunes adversely. Nana confined his attention mostly to the south, Mahadji to the north. They did not meet for over 10 years and had no personal exchange of views. They corresponded frequently, but after all, written correspondence, which often evoked acrimonious, wordy and endless explanations, could not settle all the growing concerns of a vast and scattered state, and resulted in irritation and discomfiture for all workers. Hundreds of letters and papers have been printed, out of the correspondence that

passed between various persons and parties during the 20 years in which these two men, as the principal actors on the stage, conducted the Maratha affairs; they clearly show the contrast to which I have alluded above.

5. *Drawbacks of Nana's policy.*

The personal contrast having thus been made clear, I shall now proceed to discuss what I consider to be the drawbacks of Nana's policy.

(*a*) WANT OF A CONCILIATORY SPIRIT.

Nana started his work as a member of the ministerial Cabinet called the Council of the *Bara-Bhais* or 'Twelve Brothers,' of which at the beginning the veteran Sakharam Bapu was the sole moving spirit. Nana's cousin Moroba, Trimbakrao Pethe, Haripant Phadke, Mahadji Sindia, Tukoji Holkar, Bhavanrao Pratinidhi, Maloji Ghorpade, in fact most of the prominent persons of the day, were supposed to be members of this Council, which would have been strong and capable of lasting results, had it continued on the lines on which it was started. Perhaps instead of Nana's personal rule, the nation would have more readily submitted to the rule of a strong and wise cabinet. It was indeed a singular opportunity for working out a constitutional system of government in the place of the personal rule of a dictator. Nana shows full knowledge of the working of Hastings' Council at Calcutta and of Hornby's Council at Bombay, where matters were decided on the principle of the majority of votes. Both

the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa had proved failures, so that Nana's past experience and foresight should have convinced him of the wisdom of continuing the *Bara-Bhai* Council for the Maratha administration. Instead of taking this line, instead of replacing incompetent members by those in his own confidence, he gradually removed all the members, one by one, and concentrated all power into his own hand. Sakharam Bapu and Moroba Fadnis, two of his best colleagues, were removed and imprisoned on a charge of treason. Of a conciliatory nature, Sakharam was often compelled by circumstances to have separate dealings with all parties, with even enemies during war time, *e.g.* with the Nizam, Hyder and the British. Nana looked upon this as double-dealing or treason, and got him imprisoned. If it was necessary to remove them both, he should at least have introduced new members to take their places, but after a couple of years even the name of the *Bara-Bhais* is not seen to exist. Treason in those days had a peculiar meaning. Narayan Rao was murdered, certainly at the instigation of Raghoba, who was however the only surviving member of the Peshwas' family, and for whose past services, with all his faults, very many people felt a sort of reverence. Except a few implacable spirits who were determined to visit the late Peshwa's murderers with severe punishment, there was a large body of public opinion in Maharastra which looked at the event more leniently and advocated a conciliatory policy. Many were indifferent whether Raghoba or the new born baby ruled their destinies; they certainly

wished that Raghoba should be provided with the means of decent comfort commensurate with his position. Left to his own resources, he seduced sardars and commanders and formed a strong party of his own, particularly winning over those who in previous times had served him faithfully. In these circumstances Sakharam Bapu tried his best to save the situation by a sort of policy of compromise by avoiding extreme measures *i.e.* by conciliating the two conflicting domestic forces. Mahadji Sindia and others and even Sakharam Bapu did not view with favour the infliction of punishment on Raghoba. These men therefore appeared to Nana as traitors deserving punishment. In the case of Mahadji, Nana was helpless, otherwise, if he had the means, he would have punished him in the same way as he did Sakharam Bapu. This obviously amounts to a mistake of statesmanship on the part of Nana. Forgiveness in such cases forms a part of practical wisdom. But Nana was inexorable in his methods of punishment. When a son was born to Narayan Rao, Raghoba lost his pretensions and should have been allowed to run away as a fugitive. He was, however, tenaciously pursued and unwillingly driven into the arms of the British, which brought about the war, all but shattering the prestige of the Marathas. It was enough to take the wind out of his sails as the Queen's Proclamation did in the case of the mutineers of 1857. If the *Bara-Bhais* had issued a proclamation asking people to come back to their avocations and warning them against sympathizing with the fugitive Raghoba, matters would probably have

settled down quietly and Raghoba would have obtained no support outside. Many sardars and influential leaders acted only as the exigencies of the moment required, looking to their own personal interest, and siding with the party which benefited them most. Nana on the other hand got full details of each and every follower of Raghoba, confiscated their property and houses, and punished their families and relations, which terribly exasperated the people for many years, so that all functions of a normal administration were almost brought to a standstill. The conciliatory policy pursued by Bapu would perhaps have availed better. It would have restored amity in the Peshwa's family, left no permanent scars and sores behind. Baji Rao II. might possibly have grown up with a different attitude not only towards Nana but towards all others upon whom he later on tried to wreak his vengeance.

(*b*) DID NOT REALIZE BRITISH PRESSURE IN THE NORTH.

Nana was much irritated at the prominence which Mahadji attained in the conduct of the Treaty of Salbye. He could not understand why Mahadji withdrew to the north and established himself far away in Malwa leaving the conduct of the Deccan campaign to others. Not conversant with military affairs, Nana could not realize that the centre of gravity of Indian politics was fast shifting from the Deccan to the north. Clever as Nana was in acquiring through his agents and spies the minutest information and details of movements and events

that happened hundreds of miles away, he could not realize the broad military pressure which the rising British power was bringing to bear upon the future of India, from the east and the north, where they slowly consolidated their position so as to make a further move and circumvent the Maratha power when a suitable opportunity would arise. Of all Indians Mahadji alone understood this pressure from personal and practical experience of the military dispositions of the British. Nana was ever insistent in calling Mahadji to the south in order not only to fight the national enemies in the Deccan, but to control any independent move on his part. Mahadji had closely watched the celebrated victorious march of General Goddard from the river Jumna to Burhanpur and on to Surat, splitting the whole of north India as it were into halves like a piece of bamboo. The havoc which the British guns had made during the campaign of Talegaum and the ease with which the British were quietly strengthening their position on the west coast by the capture of Bassein and Thana, were factors which impressed Mahadji immensely. To effect a counterpoise, he withdrew himself entirely from the south, knowing that he could get the best terms in his contemplated move for peace with the British, if he could deal with them in the north rather than at the court of Poona, where the pressure from the Bombay Government was irresistible. From the ample correspondence that is now available on the subject, Mahadji seems to have urged that if he had withdrawn his troops into the south, the British would have captured Central

India by one stroke, taken possession of the Emperor and dictated terms to the Marathas. This catastrophe in the north, which Mahadji wanted to prevent, was inexplicable to Nana, who ever after suspected treason on his part against the central Maratha Government in every plan or move that Mahadji undertook or suggested, and gave open directions to his agents to thwart Mahadji, who, on the other hand, followed a conciliatory policy towards Warren Hastings and did his best indirectly to frustrate the English designs in Bengal, Oudh, Central India and Delhi, for which he had to station himself for a long time between Mathura and Gwalior, in order to exercise a direct and immediate check. In fact, it certainly becomes clear that Nana did not understand the situation in the north, nor realize that no amount of clever diplomacy was so effective as when it is backed by the sword. He should have done well to go there personally and share with Mahadji the risks and responsibilities involved in the long drawn struggle. But suspicious by nature, Nana was always afraid of his life, and would never venture into Mahadji's camp.

Maratha politics at that time would have attained immense strength if Nana had gone to the north, and putting his own personality in the background, allowed a free hand to Mahadji. Even the young Peshwa would have received a valuable preparation for his future career, had he been allowed to visit the northern regions about the year 1787 or 88, when he was fourteen years of age. All the persons in the Peshwas' family started active life

about the age of twelve and this was then considered as the most healthy and necessary equipment for all youngsters to possess. The outside world would have seen that a young master was growing in the Peshwas' house and consequently the petty internal jealousies and the spirit of insubordination, which had been so rampant, would have been kept under check. Many irritating problems and important political topics, such as the disputes between Mahadji and Ali Bahadur, the war with Tipu, the disordered affairs of the Holkars, to name only a few among a host of others, could have been easily settled on the spot in personal discussion and compromise. Several misunderstandings between Nana and Mahadji themselves would have been cleared. But Nana's suspicious nature and fear of danger to life, prevented the Peshwa from undertaking any journey beyond about a hundred miles' radius from Poona. Wai and Nasik are about the only places that the Peshwa had visited, before he died at the age of twenty-one. Even a visit to Bombay, which the British would then have cordially welcomed, would have been most educative. But the solicitude of Nana for the young Peshwa's life was too strong to permit him to obtain the sort of education he most needed. In view of the Peshwa's premature death, however, such a discussion seems now out of place.

6. *Confused affairs of Mahadji.*

In criticizing Nana Fadnis' administration let me not create a wrong impression about the inherent

ability of Mahadji Sindia either. For, as I have more than once remarked, he too was not free from blame for mismanagement and irregularities which seem to be ingrained in the nature of the Marathas. Here is a typical instance corroborated by contemporary evidence, showing how Mahadji's affairs were in great disorder and confusion. One Sadashiv Dinkar, an agent of Nana Fadnis, sent the following interesting observations to him at Poona, from the camp of Mahadji Sindia near Mathura about the year 1788:

'A regular income, a fixed expenditure and moderation are the three essentials of any sound undertaking. Mahadji has just obtained ten lacs, but you will be surprised to learn how the money has been spent. As for his army expenditure, the Maratha forces from the Deccan have been suffering appalling miseries which I am unable to describe in words. They are not able to pay off their debts even by selling their horses. A trooper hardly gets Rs. 10 a month; how can he live on this? Mahadji has spent tremendously on his new regiments of infantry, but his eminent Maratha assistants, who laid down their lives in capturing Gohad and Gwalior, have suffered terrible destitution. Mahadji never enquires if all the men put down on paper in the roll of the infantry regiments are really present or not. There is no inspection, no roll-call; and the vast amounts spent on them do not reach the hands of the men to whom they are due, but the money is pocketed by unsrcupulous middlemen. There is enormous confusion and misappropriation.

The artillery also is entirely mismanaged. All the employees from the Deccan have left service and returned home. Money has been poured into useless channels. I have already said how scanty the income of Mahadji is. Then come the huge debts borrowed from the bankers who are demanding payment. Abaji Naik demands thirty lacs. There are any number of other money-lenders, Deccani, Hindu, Gujarati, Rangde (Marwadis) whose demands for repayment are pressing, and who have been worrying Mahadji severely. He has already mortgaged the prospective income of the next two years. He has exhausted all his private purse also, which was reported to contain some twenty-five lacs. Excessive rains during the last four years have reduced the country to a condition of famine. One of Mahadji's revenue collectors had to resort to inhuman measures in order to squeeze money out of the cultivators. He tied rags to the bodies of the rich and the poor alike and pouring oil on them set them on fire. You can easily imagine the state of the country under such hardships. Lands have been deserted, cultivation has stopped; what little was produced was taken away by the old claimants, predecessors of Mahadji. Owing to famine some villages have become depopulated; one house has been found to contain twenty dead bodies with no one alive in it to dispose of them: such is the case of the country between the Chambal and Kashmir. Crowded rows of men are seen streaming from one place to another in search of food. Famine and robbery have enhanced their agony, and

a third evil, *viz.* Mahadji's tax-collectors, has now been added to the first two, for these collectors are by no means less exacting; but with all their efforts they could hardly collect any cash. As regards tribute from the various states, Jaypur agreed on paper to pay twenty-one lacs: a large amount it looks, but only two lacs were paid in cash and two more in jewellery by slow degrees; the remainder, it was stipulated, was to be collected out and out from the ryots of the state, and for that purpose 2000 troops have been despatched into Jaypur territory. This is the condition of one state only. There are others who do not come to terms at all. Mahadji has to defray all the expenses of the Emperor and his armies, out of his own pocket. He has borrowed as much as he could get, and has already spent all that he had saved. He alone knows if he has any more cash now in his possession; he farms out the revenue to the highest bidder; no Deccani is willing to undertake this farming. Mahadji is in search of a banker who would undertake to pay the Emperor every month out of the collections farmed out to him. The present bankers being all helpless, refuse to undertake this impracticable job. I know what I am writing; it is the naked truth. A healthy administration is that in which the master is never in want, in which the army is contented, and the ryots are happy. If these three conditions do not exist, God alone can take care of them. His will must prevail.")

If this was the condition of the finances of one of our best and the most famous chiefs in his palmy

days, we can easily imagine what Maratha rule was like in its declining period. As I have said, things were different during the 60 years regime of the first four Peshwas. The above description only shows that matters were drifting towards a rapid fall.

As regards the charge that Mahadji was trying to gain independence to serve his own ends, so as to injure the interests of the Maratha State, I have not been able to find any evidence to sustain it. He perhaps claimed a free hand in the management of affairs, when he was convinced that the State was going to ruin. He never discarded the help or association of Nana, whose capacity no one else knew better. One thing is quite clear. Mahadji has again and again expressed his unbounded confidence in the devotion and sagacity of Nana, whose agent Sadashiv Dinkar gives the following account of his interview with Mahadji in September 1788: "It gives me supreme pleasure to inform you, that just as a drowning man recovers courage upon learning that some one is coming to his rescue, so did Mahadji feel immense relief from his critical position in the midst of enemies when timely help of money and forces came under Ali Bahadur from the Deccan. Mahadji frankly confesses, to the shame of his numerous dependents, that in his sore need no one ran to his help as did his noble brother Nana. Great are those who do great things."

7. *Limitations of Nana's power.*

It was a mere grievous accident, I mean the murder of Narayan Rao, that brought Nana to

the front. He was quite aware of his own weakness, *viz.*, that he was not a general and never could lead armies on a battlefield. For this he had to depend upon others, such as Mahadji Sindia, Tukoji Holkar, Haripant Phadke, or Parshuram Bhau Patwardhan. The weakness of such a position particularly in those days can very well be imagined. Of these men Nana found Mahadji alone intractable, so that whenever Mahadji did not readily fall in with Nana's views or policy, there naturally arose a friction, which resulted in strong factions involving prominent persons, and which injured the interests of the State. In such circumstances Mahadji was not the man who would scruple to make the best use of the situation to suit his policy or interest. This sort of factious spirit prevailed throughout the period of their joint careers of 20 years and unconsciously damaged Maratha power and prestige, a result which, in my opinion, would have been averted if Nana had in some cases put his own personality in the background. It is a mistake very common to powerful statesmen, who have already rendered useful services, that they come to think themselves indispensable for the conduct of national affairs, and try to stick to their office, when perhaps their withdrawal might be more advantageous to the public interest. This is particularly the case in eastern politics, where there are no constitutional safeguards as in the British parliamentary system. We can vividly realize this point to-day, if we remember how quietly and easily Prime Ministers of England like Asquith, Lloyd George or MacDonald laid down their office

the moment they found that they had not the nation's support behind them. Nana Fadnis does not seem to have realized his own limitations of power and usefulness. Particularly is this the case after the unfortunate and untimely death of the young Peshwa in 1795, when Nana, out of love of power, submitted to the crafty Peshwa Baji Rao II., his hereditary enemy, and accepted office under him. If Nana had then quietly withdrawn from politics and watched the situation from a distance, he would possibly have rendered greater service, at least saved himself from humiliation at the hands of worthless intriguers. Nana should have known very well that he was not immortal, that however capable he might have been, his end must come when the nation would have to do without him.

Another point which in my opinion Nana does not seem to have realized, is his failure to understand why most of the old sirdars and ministers hesitated to render obedience to him and to execute his orders. Nana was in his original position only a *phadnis*, a mere head-accountant of the State, much lower in the scale of service than the sirdars themselves. He was doubtless acting in the name of the Peshwa who was a child. The sirdars had a natural sympathy for the old and experienced Raghoba more than for the little baby in whose name Nana acted. Nana had occasion to understand what a difference there was between the prestige of the Chhatrapati and that of the Peshwa after the death of Shahu. Far less then was his own prestige, when, after the murder of Narayan Rao,

power came into his hands. Prestige is of course a nebulous substance having no material value. But prestige often stirs the hearts of men in practical life. Even the strong British Government to-day is very careful about it. In this lies the explanation of the factious and defiant spirit which Nana had to encounter in most of his measures, from his own compatriots. Nana tried his utmost to bring up the young Peshwa most carefully, and staked his all, even the constitution, upon that one individual, but he could have seen that with all one's efforts it is not humanly possible to make a soldier or a statesman out of a young boy at one's will. Why should Nana think that a youth of 20 could be so trained or trusted as to exercise the full functions of the master of a State and to look after its concerns which he knew were beyond his own capacity? As a matter of fact the young Peshwa, as we know from the ample evidence that is available, would not have proved worthy of his illustrious ancestors, possibly no better than Baji Rao II., who so easily gambled away the Maratha Raj. Many writers have lamented the untimely death of this young prince, in whom all the nation's hopes were centred, and whom the people had all along fondly hailed as the saviour of the nation, simply because his birth at a critical moment in the nation's fortunes, had saved the realm from the tyranny of the renegade Raghoba. We now wrongly attribute to his untimely death the eventual fall of the Maratha power. If this youth had lived long a legitimate master would certainly have been provided, perhaps

by no means a capable one. But more essential was the provision of protective military measures against many of these problems, as the fate of nations is ultimately decided by a recourse to arms. It was therefore the duty of Nana to have followed up Mahadji's measures for the adoption of western military methods. He should have started the same reform of the army in the Deccan in collaboration with Mahadji, instead of suspiciously wrangling over the wording of the terms of the Treaty of Salbye. Failure to improve the military engine of the State detracts much from the sagacity and foresight with which Nana is usually credited. No amount of financial skill, diplomatic wisdom or careful bringing up of the young Peshwa could compensate for this grand failure. The saranjamdars would doubtless have revolted against a compulsory reform of the old accepted methods, but Nana in co-operation with Mahadji could have carried the same policy through, beginning with his own Huzrat (household cavalry) under Haripant Phadke; the Patwardhans and other sirdars could then gradually have been brought into the system. This was the only way of saving the Maratha State.

8. *What could have been done for future safety?*

The Marathas as a race often seem to lack vision and foresight, which is usually seen associated with the Anglo-Saxon race. Indeed, we marvel at the slow but steady progress of the British nation in the work of empire-building in India. Every step

they take is sure, though sometimes slow: if an ambitious spirit like a Wellesley or a Dalhousie follows a vigorous policy, a successor is deliberately selected to soften its rigour and slowly to consolidate the former gains, without having recourse to a retrograde step or a slide back. They never do a single thing without full consultation, discussion and deliberation, in which personalities do not count, and which point only to the ulterior national interests. With us, on the other hand, it is the personalities that count. We neglect to take a long vision and to provide for ultimate objects. We only look to our own immediate concerns of the moment. "When I am gone, the world is nothing to me,"[*] is an Indian proverb which aptly illustrates our attitude of mind. When, therefore, we examine the career of Nana Fadnis and join in the chorus of his praise, we do not stop to think what steps he should have taken but did not take for preserving the Maratha State after him. The year 1792-93 provided a fit occasion for some such measures being adopted. Mahadji had returned from the north to Poona in June 1792, laden with honours and riches. A grand ceremony was held at Poona for the Peshwa to assume the titles conferred upon him by the Emperor. A campaign against Tipu had given the Marathas a grand success, which had increased their prestige. For nearly two years after this, all the important statesmen and commanders were assembled in Poona under the auspices of the young and rising Peshwa, with high national aspirations, and there were rejoicings for the success in war and diplomacy

throughout India, as has been graphically described by Govindrao Kale.* The *holi* ceremony of March 1793 was performed in Poona with unsurpassed gaiety which has hardly yet died out of the Maratha memory, when, it is said the roads of the city for five miles between the Peshwa's palace and Sindia's camp at Wanodi, were covered with knee-deep coloured powder called *gulal*. These happenings ought to have awakened thoughts of the future in the mind of every sane person. In fact, many in and out of office knew very well that all was not well at home; that the Chhatrapati was sorely discontented and entertained a secret hatred for the Peshwas; that the Rajputs had been entirely disaffected by the measures of Mahadji; that the two great figures of the day, Nana and Mahadji, were in open rivalry for power and mastery over the young Peshwa; that this prince was already showing enough signs of impatience and incapacity to manage the State. All observant persons, friends and foes, had sounded enough warnings of the coming danger. If all the wise persons had sat and conferred together on measures of future safety, Nana and Mahadji could have restored the Chhatrapati to power and under his presidency a sort of a new Maratha cabinet or council of management could have been formed. If they had thus acted in a concerted manner and established a kind of regency for the conduct of affairs, some of the future dangers could have been avoided. The scheming family of Raghoba were

* See p. 9

alive; his two growing sons were by no means innocuous, as Nana well knew, and could not be done away with; so some measure was badly needed for protection all round. From the military point of view the armies of Sindia, Holkar and the Bhosles of Nagpur, all trained under European command, would have been a match for the British had they been organized and united, as has been admitted by British observers of the day. But nothing of the kind was done. Such a step was quite possible for Nana, Mahadji and the rest to take, but the attention of these wiseacres does not seem to have peeped into the future. During the next few years death played a havoc in the Maratha State, which to some extent contributed to hasten its ultimate downfall. If some urgent measures for future safety had been taken in time, it would have been possible to save the situation. Much of the blame for this neglect ought naturally to go to Nana Fadnis, the last of the Maratha statesmen and head of the Maratha State, having handled its affairs for 30 years. An opportune moment presented itself for such a move at the death of the young Peshwa. But personal jealousies rather than concerted action came into prominence.

These are some of the points which have occurred to me as I read the papers and correspondence of those days and tried to analyse for myself the ultimate causes of the Maratha decline and the workings of the minds of some of the men in authority at the time. There is another charge which some writers have urged against Nana, *viz.*,

that of inflating his private purse at the expense of the State. This sort of corruption in public matters was so common in those days, that we need not single out one particular person for blame; but it is said that Nana's private property amounted to several crores, quite beyond his own needs, it would seem. It passes our comprehension how a great financier like him could think his property secure, when his opponents would come to power, as he himself had dealt most harshly with Sakharam Bapu and others, whose property he had relentlessly confiscated. In fact, Nana suffered the same fate as Sakharam Bapu at the hands of Baji Rao II. Nana is usually credited with having taken measures for preserving the independence of the Maratha State, but it is difficult to understand how his concentration of all power in his own hands or his large private fortune was going to achieve this result after his death. Why should we assume that Nana was more solicitous about the welfare of the State than Mahadji, who could have easily taken that credit for himself? We often unsuspectingly assume that Nana was the State and that he alone could save it. Let us learn to discard unwarranted assumptions in judging historical questions. Mahadji, on the other hand, did for a time successfully withstand and let down the British ambitions and would have done greater service if he had lived long enough. So I think Nana would have acquired a much higher place in history, had he subordinated his love of power and monetary interest to the service of the nation, by allowing a

chance to others for managing the affairs of the State. Nana and Mahadji had sworn to be brothers and to support each other in all situations, and it must be said to their credit, that although they differed often radically, they never allowed matters to proceed to an open rupture between themselves.

LECTURE VII

THE DOWNFALL OF THE MARATHA STATE

1. *The Peshwai hastening to its end.*

For a long time matters were assuming a threatening aspect between the Peshwa's government and the Nizam owing to the latter's failure to pay the large accumulated arrears of tribute. Mahadji was anxious to employ his trained battalions and wipe the Nizam out of existence. The latter had hoped that the British would readily assist him with troops to ward off the danger of an attack from the Marathas. The crisis arose towards the end of 1794 after the death of Mahadji Sindia earlier in that year. Nana Fadnis collected a large Maratha army at Poona and invaded the Nizam's territories. The Nizam also came from the east prepared to oppose the Marathas. The two armies met at Kharda about 150 miles due east of Poona. The Marathas inflicted a crushing defeat and exacted a treaty on paper containing severe terms from the Nizam. The victory was in many senses a crowning glory for the Marathas, as this was the last signal occasion on which most of the prominent Maratha sirdars and jagirdars assembled at Poona for a common purpose, offering cordial obedience to the young Peshwa, and giving the outside world an impression that after all the troubles of a generation,

the Maratha nation had recovered their former prestige and grandeur. But this was only a passing show. Closely following the victory of Kharda, the promising Peshwa developed the malady of a slow fever, which weakened him so fearfully that he could not stand and yet he could not avoid the tremendous exertions involved in the Dussara celebrations (Oct. 25, 1795). On that day his fever rose very high, and two days afterwards he fell down in a swoon from the balcony of his palace fracturing his thigh, and died in another two days without recovering consciousness. This sad incident dashed the hopes of the nation finally to pieces. After long deliberations and bickerings between Nana Fadnis and the other ministers, the hated Raghoba's son Bajirao II. was brought out of confinement at Junnar and invested with the robes of Peshwaship. This sealed the doom of the Marathas. Both in character and capacity Bajirao was utterly worthless and he courted the support of an equally incompetent young lad, Daulatrao Sindia, the successor of Mahadji. The strong battalions of Sindia trained under French officers were of no avail to him as he had not the skill to keep them under proper control. A bitter enmity arose between the Peshwa and the young Holkar, Yashwantrao, who was a spirited and brave but rather rash soldier. In order to take revenge upon the Peshwa for the wrong he had done, Yashwantrao came upon Poona with a large and devoted army and demanded justice for his grievances. In a pitched battle on the outskirts of the city, the Peshwa was routed and ran

for his life first to Raigad and Mahad and thence by sea to Bassein, where he contracted the famous treaty with Resident Col. Close, agreeing to subsidize British troops to help him to regain his Peshwaship. Thus the independence of the Maratha raj was lost, on the last day of 1802. How the next year Arthur Wellesley reinstated the Peshwa in his capital, inflicted crushing defeats upon the combined armies of Sindia and the Raja of Nagpur and how Lord Lake in the north won brilliant victories by capturing Delhi and the Emperor from Sindia's custody, are matters of common knowledge and need not be pursued in detail here. British supremacy over India was quickly accomplished and the Maratha supremacy vanished for ever.

2. *Marquess of Hastings on Bajirao II.*

The contrast between the two representatives of the Maratha and the British States, Bajirao and the Marquess of Hastings opposing each other in their final struggle, is indeed most striking. The consummate ability of the latter is apparent in every step he took to compass the Maratha downfall. I cannot resist the temptation of quoting a few lines from his *Private Journal*, which is full of historical interest. Writes the Marquess of Hastings on 23-3-1817 and during the succeeding months: "Towards the close of last year we discovered traces of many intrigues of the Peshwa's, which bore the appearance of hostility to us. It appears that even in the autumn of last year he was soliciting Sindia, Holkar, Ameerkhan, the Gaekwar, the Raja of

Nagpur and the Nizam to join with him and drive the English out of India. I shall now rivet such shackles upon Sindia and Holkar as that all the treachery they are at this moment meditating, will be impotent. In fact the downfall of the Marathas is achieved."

For fifteen years the last Peshwa carried on his precarious existence and had ultimately to surrender to the force of British arms in his final struggle with them. This period of fifteen years between the Treaty of Bassein in 1802 and the final submission of the Marathas in 1818, was one of peculiar unrest and uncertainty for all India, owing particularly to the undefined spheres of the various chiefs and potentates, who did not know what to choose between rebellion against and submission to the British power. Historically studied, it is almost a virgin field for investigation. I may mention here in passing that the Alienation Office at Poona possesses a rare collection of old English records, known as the Poona Residency Files, which is a veritable mine of valuable information concerning all Indian States from the Punjab to the south, as it contains profuse despatches penned by prominent British diplomats who ably supported and carried out the measures emanating from the central Government. The *Handbook* to these records recently issued by the Bombay Government contains a detailed list of these files which deserve a careful study.

3. *Bajirao's last effort.*

From 1803 to 1818 Bajirao enjoyed a sleepy existence at Poona, under the supervision of a

British Resident. While he had no ability to regain his lost position as head of the Maratha confederacy, he committed the folly of nursing a secret feeling of resentment against the British power and employed all kinds of subterfuges to overcome them. But he received no support from his nation, who deeply resented his acceptance of British aid at Bassein at the sacrifice of liberty. Instead of consolidating his position and conciliating his subordinates, he used British help to put them down. But his hatred towards the British went on increasing and he felt his thraldom so irksome that he waited ardently for a chance to strike a blow against them. Such a chance did indeed occur during the period of the Nepal War (1814-1816). Writes Sir A. Lyall: "The war in Nepal encouraged among the Marathas an inclination to try conclusions again with the English. The Peshwa began to assemble troops and collect military stores. The Pindhari hordes became a perpetual menace to the country. They maintained a secret understanding with the Maratha rulers of Poona, Nagpur, Gwalior and Indore. The difficulties and reverses which the British suffered in the Nepal war at its initial stages, inspired the Marathas with some hope of finding their opportunity for re-establishing their lost power." Indeed, had there been a capable leader to organize all the scattered elements of Maratha power and present a united opposition to the British, that moment was certainly auspicious, and the Maratha national sentiment very favourable. But the cool and calculating Marquess of Hastings once more proved

a match for any Indian move towards unity. He bided his time quietly while the Nepal War was on, and having effectively closed it in March 1816, he brought the whole weight of the British power to bear against any Indians who dared to defy it, with the result that all traces of opposition in India were finally extinguished in less than a year.

4. *Causes of the Maratha downfall.*

During my previous discourses I have now and then explained what the strong and weak points of the Maratha character are, from which one can easily conclude, why they failed to build up a permanent national Government either for the whole of India or even for the Maratha portion of it.

BAJIRAO AND DAULATRAO PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE.

The foregoing discourse coupled with the briefer remarks now and then thrown in must, I hope, have made it amply clear in what exact direction one could look for the real and immediately relevant causes of the Maratha downfall. In the investigation of this subject we must become very precise. It is no use pointing out the merely general causes, for there is no phenomenon in this mortal world for which many general circumstances and situations cannot be assigned as causes. What history needs is the particular circumstances or conditions which could directly produce the results we are called upon to explain. Later on I am going to deal even with the general topics which many writers of eminence have in their own way put forth. It should also

be remembered in this connection that many scholars who have dealt with the subject have alluded to it incidentally and in a manner suited to the line of argument they were following. Some have unconsciously treated the subject with a view to suit their preconceived notions. Such, at any rate, is my impression of their treatment, whenever my own views differ from theirs.

I can unhesitatingly attribute the Maratha downfall primarily to the incapacity of the two frivolous youths Peshwa Bajirao II. and Daulatrao Sindia who, owing to a fortuitous coincidence, came into possession of supreme power in the Maratha State. Their misdeeds brought the Poona court and society to such a moral degradation that no one's life, property or honour was safe. People even in distant parts of the land had to suffer terrible misery through misrule, oppression, plunder and devastation. The sirdars and jagirdars, particularly of the Southern Maratha Country, were so completely alienated that they rushed for escape into the arms of the English. If two such individuals as Bajirao and Daulatrao, it may be argued, could wantonly wreck the solid structure of generations, it certainly presupposes a want of proper organization or an accepted constitution for the State. This is doubtless true. If we were an organized government, even these two incapable youths could have been set aside to make room for a more competent agency. But it must even then be conceded that in all human affairs one individual alone can often do or undo any good or great work. Just as one

Shivaji could build the Maratha raj, so could one Bajirao destroy it. Individuals mar history as much as they make it. The want of a competent organizer at the head of the State at a critical period, as Munro has emphatically asserted, is the first prominent cause of ruin. While Bajirao and Daulatrao were playing their wicked game, thoughtful men were not wanting who felt a strong impulse to come forth and improve matters, but the two youths proved too powerful for such weak and scattered reforming forces. These latter could have gained strength and asserted themselves, had there been no capable British rivals on the opposite side to turn to the best advantage the least drawback or loop-hole on the Maratha side. Yashwantrao Holkar tried his best to remove Bajirao and put in his place his brother Amritrao, and Arthur Wellesley has remarked that if Amritrao had been the Peshwa, there would have been no chance for the British to establish their supremacy. But such a consummation was purposely prevented by them through skilful diplomatic and strategic moves. In fact Bajirao always taunted his British helpers with the remark, "You came as friends and allies to help me retain my power, while you have tried your best to pull me down." There is no escape from this dilemma. I shall later on refer to the strong contrast between the personnel of the two powers confronting each other and to the superior politics and organization of the British, which easily explain the Maratha fall.

5. *Neglect of science.*

In addition to the particular causes mentioned above several general ones can also be pointed out. Among these may be mentioned the utter neglect of the study of science and of military training and organization. Those who conducted the State, failed to take note of what their European neighbours —the Portuguese, the French and the British,— were doing in India, and how they maintained their influence. Baji Rao I., and his brother Chimaji conquered Bassein from the Portuguese after a heroic fight, of which the nation ever after talked proudly, but failed to take the logical step that the experience of their naval fighting with the Portuguese should have suggested, *viz.*, the foundation of a naval arsenal and a ship-building base, as measures of self-defence. The Portuguese had docks, foundries for making guns, and experts to work them on scientific methods. These should have been continued under Indian management at Bassein, instead of indenting Portuguese gunners into Maratha employ like Noronha (or Musa Naran as he is known to Marathi readers). If the Portuguese base at Bassein had been kept in order and continued to be worked for naval purposes, the Peshwas would not have been under the necessity of calling for British help fifteen years later to bring the Angrias to obedience.

The Peshwas had numerous occasions to apply to those western nations for a supply of shot, powder and cannon, and often lost their campaigns for want of these materials. The necessary education and equipment could have been easily acquired and

Indian experts trained. Contemporary papers make frequent mention of how statues, pictures, swords, English iron and lead, guns, telescopes, files, medicines, clocks, articles of cutlery and crockery, paper and numerous other articles of daily use used to be constantly obtained, by way of present or purchase, from Europe ; and yet it did not occur to any of us to enquire how these articles were manufactured and why they could not be produced here. Printing presses and newspapers were known to exist in Bombay, Goa and Pondicherry. Western surgery was often resorted to by very many Indians of position and means. Peshwa Madhav Rao I. himself employed a European physician to treat him. There is mention of even gum-plaster being obtained from the British at Bombay, but intelligent and keen as these Peshwas and their advisers were, one certainly fails to understand why they utterly neglected the study and development of science, so essentially needed for the preservation of their independence. We talk glibly of the selflessness and self-sacrifice which, we claim, our religion enjoins on us. But can we show any sacrifice of ours which can even distantly compare with the tremendous sacrifice of life and money, which the western nations have made for centuries past, in the pursuit of science and exploration, in their admirable perseverance, for instance, in developing the aeroplane or exploring the polar regions or climbing the heights of the Himalayas ? It is certainly this spirit of science and enquiry, this perseverance and enterprise, this readiness to undergo hardship and privation in an abstract

cause, so generally lacking in the East, which is mainly responsible for our downfall. Until we achieve this spirit, all talk of independence or Swaraj seems hopeless. How to create this spirit must be the first concern of those who are striving to regenerate India.

6. *Neglect of artillery.*

As early as the commencement of the 16th century, the Portuguese battle-ships successfully employed siege guns in conquering important places like Goa on the west coast. A few years thereafter Babar established his Mughal Empire in India chiefly by means of guns. He borrowed the art of gunnery from the Turks, who had captured Constantinople 75 years before him with the same weapon. The Europeans developed this arm of warfare very rapidly and with its help expanded their trade, power and influence throughout the world, by naval enterprises. But the Marathas or any other Indian power never made this art their own. They got a few men trained by Bussy, mostly Muslims and Christians, to cope with the artillery of Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1760. The Peshwa employed Ibrahim Khan Gardi, and later on Nana Fadnis employed Musa Naran and Mahadji Sindia engaged De Boigne in 1784 and Perron and other French officers a few years later. But why Maratha administrators of the type of Mahadji and Nana Fadnis did not train their own men in this essential branch of warfare, passes our comprehension, except on the supposition that the Marathas feared that it would make them lose

religion and caste. To handle machines and engines requires hard, constant labour, neglecting ease and laying aside the injunctions of caste. They tried to preserve religion at the sacrifice of science. They had therefore to depend upon foreigners for a most vital means of self-protection, and since the old Maratha system of guerilla warfare could not stand against organized artillery and trained infantry, it went out of use and there was nothing else to take its place. Shivaji used both systems according to his need. Guerilla warfare came into vogue first with Malik Ambar and Shivaji and then particularly during the Maratha war with Aurangzeb; Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Khanderao Dabhade, Peshwa Bajirao I. in the earlier days, and the Sindias, the Holkars, and others in later days, being the efficient leaders in that mode of fighting. But when the Karnatak wars between the French and the English exemplified the use of long range guns with regiments of infantry to cover them, the Maratha tactics underwent a rapid change. The Peshwas did establish an artillery department at Poona and other places, under a Brahman sirdar named Panse, but the attempt was crude in the absence of proper scientific knowledge; and in addition, they never could get together sufficient Maratha infantry or ensure the training and organization required to bring it into operation at the proper moment.

The first open abandonment of the guerilla system took place at Panipat where the Marathas had the greatest confidence in the artillery corps of Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Their failure at Panipat was

not due so much to the change of tactics as to other causes into which it is not necessary to go here. But generally after Panipat the old tactics fell gradually into disuse. Mahadji Sindia noticed plainly and carefully the havoc which the British guns and their organized infantry regiments made during the campaign of Talegaum; he was surprised to see the British regiments standing firm like solid walls. He had also the same experience in Gujarat the next year. No Maratha leader had the courage to face the British guns however few they might be. Mahadji therefore determined to organize his army on the European model as soon as he was free from the entanglement of war with the British. He employed French officers who unfortunately could not be depended upon in critical times, and who proved too much for Daulatrao, the weak successor of Mahadji. Had the central Maratha Government the necessary foresight and perseverance to organize their fighting and directing machine, it appears plain that they would have been able to resist the British advance successfully. But this presupposes an organized system of government of which I shall now speak.

7. *Lack of organization.*

Another potent cause of our downfall has been our utter lack of organization or system in anything that we undertake, whether a government office or a department, or a campaign against an enemy. There is as a rule no unity of command, no distribution of work and power, no clear-cut assignment

of duties, no method, no system, no rule. This has particularly been the case with the Marathas, who by nature are not amenable to discipline or inclined to any concerted action, each one pulling independently. This has been a national weakness which was only kept in check for a time by outstanding personalities like Shivaji, Baji Rao I. or Madhav Rao I. Want of precise attention to details and pre-arrangement has been the constant drawback of all Indians. If we examine minutely why the Rajputs failed again and again against, say, Mahmud of Ghazni or Muhammad Ghori, or why Alauddin Khilji or Babar or Akbar scattered large Hindu armies at a stroke, we shall notice this prominent defect throughout, that is, there never was a perfect unity of command or a clear division and co-ordination of work on the side of the Hindus. Several Rajput princes assembled to fight the common enemy, each one coveting the honour, but not the risk, of taking the supreme command. Ahmad Shah Abdali's circumspection at Panipat deserves to be remembered in this connection. Whenever there were proposals for negotiating peace with the Marathas or interference with the fighting arrangements, Ahmad Shah always reminded his allies, as Kashirai puts it lucidly, "I am not a diplomat, I am only a soldier. So leave the business of fighting entirely to me and you may carry on your business of negotiation as you please." Whenever the Marathas have lost, it will invariably be found that the failure was due to want of proper organization and to a divided command. The Maratha

system of Government and their division of spheres among the various jagirdars were mainly responsible for this cardinal defect, *viz.*, their centrifugal tendency, of which I have spoken before. Unity of command presupposes pre-eminent qualities in a commander. He must be able to enforce rigid discipline upon all whom he has to lead. The Maratha jagirdars became entirely disorganized when power fell into the incompetent hands of Baji Rao II. Every one saw the necessity of uniting for a common purpose, but tried to save his own skin at the sacrifice of others, so that when in the second Maratha War, Sindia and the Raja of Nagpur called upon Yashvant Rao Holkar to come and join them against the British, Yashvant Rao remained studiously aloof, waiting for the outcome of the game the other two were fighting, and when the British, after smashing the power of Sindia and the Raja of Nagpur directed their arms against Yashwant Rao, his eyes were at last opened and he piteously wrote letters to all other Marathas to come and join him. The letter that he wrote is typical and will bear reproduction here: "We have all heretofore united to defend our Hindu empire; but recently, owing to family dissensions, our empire and our religion have both been declining. Their final ruin cannot be prevented unless we all unite and work together. I am doing all I can to achieve this object and am sworn to pursue it to the end of my life. I call upon God to help me. But it is no use doing this single-handed, and all of you remaining mere idle spectators, each one looking to his personal interest. It behoves

you all to combine for the defence of our empire and religion." But this appeal came too late and could not mend matters.

8. *The Maratha and the British personnel,— a contrast.*

History has often to take account of fortuitous circumstances which are usually beyond the power of human reason to account for. Similarly I cannot pass over what is usually called an unforeseen conjunction in the affairs of the Maratha kingdom. At any rate, since the downfall of the Marathas is synchronous with the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, the contrast in the relative personnel of the Marathas and the British becomes all the more striking. While one can admit that the Marathas were much inferior to the British in point of organization, and proficiency in science and arms, we must also remember that the Marathas were by no means inferior, but much superior, to any other Indian power or State of that time. The element of chance lies only in this, that before the Marathas had time to improve the scattered position of the jagirdars and consolidate their strength under a clever administrator, they were called upon to oppose the formidable British power, strong in science, constitution, unity, and naval supremacy. Between 1794 and 1800 most of the experienced and able persons in the Maratha kingdom were removed by the cruel hand of death. The old Ramshastri had already passed away on 11th November 1789. Mahadji Sindia died on 12th

February 1794, being followed by Haripant Phadke four months later (on 19th June 1794), and by Ahalyabai Holkar a year later (on 13th August, 1795). The young Peshwa Madhav Rao, who since his birth had been the joy and hope of the nation, lost his life on 27th October 1795 by an accidental fall from the balcony of his palace. The subsequent deaths of Tukoji Holkar on 15th August 1797 and of Parshuram Bhau Patwardhan on 18th September 1799 and last of all, that of Nana Fadnis on 13th March 1800, closed the final chapter of the Maratha Swaraj founded by Shivaji.

Just at the time that death played this havoc, the supreme power fell into the hands of an incapable and unscrupulous and intensely selfish Peshwa, Baji Rao II., who was quite unequal to the task which he was called upon to perform. He never trusted those who had been brought up under the old regime but selected his advisers from worthless menials, selfish priests, or intriguing upstarts like Sarjerao Ghatge, of whose misdeeds the less said the better. How could a worthless profligate like Bajirao, surrounded by men of small minds and poor character, hold his own against a phalanx of eminent personalities, on the side of the British, the masters of their age? Lord Wellesley the Governor General and his two brothers Arthur and Henry Wellesley, were men of extraordinary capacity and talent. Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington) was destined to be the conqueror of Napoleon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Sir John Malcolm, Sir Barry Close, Col. Collins, Jonathan Duncan, and

a little later Sir Thomas Munro, have all left behind them unequalled reputation even if we do not mention Jenkins, Lake and many others, second only to these. The nation which possesses such able personalities for its agents is bound to win success at any time. Why the junction of the two centuries should be marked by such a terrible contrast in the politics of India, is difficult to explain, except by attributing it to chance, which our great philosophy of the *Bhagwad Gita* emphatically admits as the fifth cause of every human affair!* The Marathas had tided over several severe crises in their career. The great Shivaji was followed by an incompetent son who nearly lost the kingdom; the death of Aurangzeb brought on another crisis, that of a civil war. Tara Bai's foolish ambition unnecessarily added to the troubles brought on by the death of Shahu. Even the battle of Panipat was not devoid of this element of chance. The untimely death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I. created the last great crisis which nearly disjointed the whole Maratha political fabric. The long history of England also is not without this element of chance, producing crises at different periods of its existence. After all, history is a justification of Providence.

9. *False notion of religion.*

But why we failed to keep pace with the scientific progress so essential for the existence of a nation

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* उपादानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पंचमम् ॥

anywhere and at any time, is also an interesting point for us to investigate. We Hindus have great achievements to our credit in the past. Art and science did exist and progress in India up to a certain time, as the architecture of the Hindu and the Muslim periods, our finest textiles, our arts and literatures, our advance in mathematics and astronomy, our ancient sea-borne trade, and various other achievements of a like nature, were not possible without a proper spirit of study and enquiry. When and how we lost this spirit is a point worth considering. I think towards the end of the 13th century, *viz.*, about the days of Ramdeorao Yadav and his great minister Hemadri, the attention of our society in general was for the first time diverted to a false notion of religious merit, *i.e.*, to pursuits of a superstitious nature, making caste restrictions rigid, enjoining upon us various religious practices as the only means of happiness and salvation, and introducing thousands of minute rules and practices entirely antagonistic to the material interests of a progressive community. Alauddin Khilji was the first Muhammadan who crossed the Nerbudda into the south and put an end to the independence of the Yadavas of Devagiri at the beginning of the 14th century, which I take to be a great landmark in Indian history, when the old order of society and politics markedly changed, making room for innovations of an undesirable character.

Hemadri, the great minister of the Yadava kings, was a learned pandit and patron of Sanskrit learning, and used his great influence, learning and energy in

bringing about what I may call an entire revolution in society and religion. He employed a large number of pandits for several years and compiled out of old *Shastras* and existing practices his great work called *Chaturvarga Chintamani*, a comprehensive compilation in four parts, *viz.*, 1st *Vrata-khanda* (religious vows to different deities), 2nd *Dana-khanda* (charities to Brahman priests), 3rd *Tirtha-khanda* (pilgrimage to holy places) and 4th *Moksha-khanda* (the attainment of salvation). These practically covered the whole life of a Hindu. Being an intensely practical man, Hemadri revolutionized very many arts of life also. He is the author of a style of building houses and temples, which till recently was universal in Maharastra, and of a style of cursive writing of the Devanagari characters now known as *Modi*. If we examine this great compilation of Hemadri, we shall find that he has prescribed in all some 2,000 practices or vows, repetitions, incantations for driving away evil spirits, rites and ceremonies, penances and punishments, prayers and cures, charities and offerings of various kinds, which it is needless to mention here. So that, if every member of society were to practise them all, he would have to do at least five or seven of them each day throughout the year. The various deities are mentioned giving details as to how they should be propitiated, what articles of diet were liked by each, how Brahmans should be fed at the worship of each deity, all purporting to occupy men's time and energy for the attainment of religious merit and the salvation of the soul, leaving no room for the

ordinary concerns of life and making the people perfectly oblivious of the fact that they had any secular duties to perform.

(During some 300 years after Hemadri the influence of this compilation continued to divert men's minds from study and progress; indeed, the traces of that system are to be found even in our own day. Since the 14th century two main ideals of life have influenced men's minds in India,—the one that of the religious practices just mentioned, which I have termed the School of Hemadri, although many other authors of great learning and note in other provinces also worked in the same direction, such as Shulapani Upadhyaya and Raghunandan Bhattacharya, as also the great lawyers of the Bhatta family of Benares, *viz.*, Narayan Bhatta, Kamalakar Bhatta and Nilkantha. All these laid down, as I said, one ideal of life, which was picked up mostly by the upper classes of the priestly persuasion.) The other ideal which was mainly accepted by the lower classes or the ignorant masses, was represented by saints like Kabir, Nanak, Eknath and Chaitanya, whose theme was the spread of the *Bhagavata Dharma* or the *Bhakti* cult, *i.e.*, devotion and prayers. Their object was to translate all religious thought from Sanskrit into the vernaculars and create equality and universal brotherhood among all classes of the people, enjoining upon them humble and sincere devotion to God as the only means of salvation. Both the ideals turned men's thoughts away from any original study of the physical sciences. In my opinion, our dark

ages commenced just about the time when they ended in Europe.

Ranade has described a movement for religious revival in Europe also, at the same time as in India, but there it was a thorough change from the old to the new, as we know from the lives of men like Luther and Bacon. In Europe, the religious reform followed the Renaissance and did not prevent attention to science and progress. A hundred years before Shivaji, Sir Thomas More laid down fresh lines of progress and education in England. A few years before More, Columbus and others, with the help of mathematics and geography, had made many new discoveries and undertaken voyages throughout the world. The art of printing had commenced to diffuse knowledge and enfranchise men's minds from superstition. The average education in Europe was then far superior to and of a more practical nature than that which was current in India. A list of the Shastris and Pandits of Shivaji's days has been published in one of the volumes printed by the *Bharat Itihas Mandal* of Poona, but it contains no name which can compare in depth of knowledge and practical utility, with Bacon or any other European scholar of those days. The list has doubtless many eminent names: but they are all of the old scholastic type, hardly going beyond wordy grammar and logic of the *ghata-pata* kind. Education in Europe liberalized thought and life, made the people bold, active and venturesome, while in India under the two ideals mentioned above, the people remained steeped in ignorance and

superstition, self-contented and resigned, seeking salvation in the world beyond, without caring to improve the one they were living in.

10. *Superior British politics.*

The inquisitive nature of the British people and their superior diplomacy added immensely to their strength as compared with the Marathas. During the first Maratha War the British had full and detailed information in their possession as regards the Maratha Raj, its armies, the comparative worth of the various jagirdars, their mutual relations and their family disputes. The British knew very well who were likely to succumb to outside influences and who were staunchly loyal to the Peshwas. When they commenced the war, they were prepared for any eventuality. Apart from Hornby, Hastings, Mostyn, Anderson, Upton, Malet, Goddard and a few others who were helping directly in the war, there were many other accredited British agents, touring in the country for purposes of trade, and simultaneously obtaining all kinds of information, say, about the Maratha forts and their positions, the paths leading to them, the condition of the people, local disputes and political happenings. This shows how inquisitive the British people are and how carefully they study and collect all useful information and immediately despatch it to the proper authorities. Mostyn was present in Poona at the time of Peshwa Narayan Rao's death, and for seven years supplied useful information to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in his despatches.

In fact, Mostyn may be said to have been the prime agent who provoked that aggressive war. On the other hand, the Maratha party had hardly any information about the doings of the British people. They knew nothing about England, about the British form of Government, about their settlements and factories in India and outside, their character and inclinations, their arms and armaments; perhaps even Nana Fadnis did not at all possess such details, so that, while the British were well posted in all matters, the Marathas were woefully ignorant.

There is no example of a Hindu having learnt English during the Maratha regime so as to talk and correspond freely in that language and obtain correct information of the British plans, their intentions and movements, while there was a large number of Englishmen who learnt Indian languages and freely spoke them. An English officer in Wellesley's days delivered an extempore speech in Marathi at Calcutta, which shows the inherent inferiority of the Marathas and accounts for much of their failure as rulers. Even Nana Fadnis was ignorant not only of the geography of the outside world, but even of India. The maps which he used in those days are extant and are fantastic, inaccurate and useless. The art of printing had long been introduced into India by the missionaries. The first English newspaper was started at Calcutta in the early eighties of the 18th century; and the earliest Indian vernacular types and printed books were those of the Christian missions in the late 18th century. As regards travel, the only mention we find of Indians

having gone to Europe in the 18th century is that of the agents of Raghoba,—Maniar Parsee and a Hindu named Hanumant Rao, who were sent by him about the year 1780 to England in order to obtain British help against the ministerial party at Poona. A letter written by Edmund Burke to Raghoba in the year 1782 exists, in which the Hindu Hanumant Rao is mentioned as almost dying owing to the severe hardships which his religion subjected him to, in the most inclement weather of Britain. Raja Ram Mohan Ray was perhaps the first Hindu of note to visit Europe from India, which he did in 1830 when steamships had come into use; while the British had been roaming over the whole world for 300 years before Ram Mohan Ray's time. Indeed, if we take into consideration the tremendous sacrifice of life and money that the British people have made for three centuries during a time when travelling by sea was most dangerous, the prize of world supremacy which they have obtained appears not at all undeserved. The Marathas failed grievously in this point also.

11. *How far is caste responsible for our downfall? Peculiar position of the British.*

Many writers Indian and foreign have put down caste jealousies and social prejudices as a direct cause of the Maratha downfall. Their reasoning is so vague that it cannot be convincing to every reader, as it is not supported by definite facts and figures. India has doubtless been a caste-ridden country and certainly suffered in various ways owing

to this evil, as I have amply shown above. But beyond that religious factor, I have not been able to understand how caste has directly and particularly affected the Marathas. Whatever may be the disadvantages of caste in general, I am of opinion that in this respect we are apt to judge of those times from our experience of present day conditions. Caste did not disable the Marathas from building up a powerful and independent kingdom and hold it by force of arms and policy, for nearly 150 years. Indeed wise and eminent personalities like Shivaji or Madhav Rao never allowed caste to interfere with their justice and fair play. A letter is extant in which the prevailing sentiment seems to have been unmistakably expressed in these words: "A government is run by all kinds of people, great and small, good and bad; but there should be no distinction made on account of their caste. All are equal children of the state; he who serves the state well should be promoted; all should be treated with equal attention and kindness. Those who harm the state should be punished, without distinction of caste. Then and then only will the administration go on without disturbance. We, as obedient and loyal servants, know only this, that all castes, whether Deshasthas, Kokanasthas, Karhadas, Prabhus, Shenvis or Marathas, all belong equally to the state and all have an equal claim on the head of the state as their father. Their service alone should be a measure of their worth and not their caste."*

* ऐतिहासिक पत्रव्यवहार No. 100

On the whole, I am not prepared to accuse the earlier Peshwas indiscriminately of showing any undue predilection for the Brahmans. If we make a correct computation, we shall find that during the rule of the Peshwas, 75% of the families that attained prominence then were not Brahmans and most of the great jagirdars were certainly non-Brahmans. It is doubtless true that a very large number of Brahman families rose to prominence particularly during the latter part of the Peshwas' regime, just as many Maratha families rose to distinction in states presided over by Maratha jagirdars. But this is merely human nature. If I have power in hand and have to employ a person for the execution of a certain job, I would naturally select one whom I know personally and in whom I can trust. Unless instances are forthcoming of unworthy Brahmans being given jobs in supersession of worthy candidates of other castes, the mere employment of a certain caste should not form a ground for condemnation. I have noticed no instance of the Peshwas having deliberately put down persons of other castes in order to promote their own, except perhaps during the days of the last Peshwa whose only concern was the propitiation of Brahmans and attainment of religious merit as the best means of serving his raj. Shivaji sternly put down some great Maratha families, Moreys, Mohites, and Ghorpades, and raised Prabhus and Brahmans to power and influence. He paid the highest respect to Ramdas and other worthy Brahmans. Can we detect any caste prejudice in this? It is worth noting that out of

the 49 persons found guilty in the murder of Narayan Rao, 24 were Deccani Brahmans of the murdered Peshwa's caste, 2 Saraswats, 3 Prabhus, 6 Marathas, 1 Maratha maid servant, 5 Musalmans and 8 northern Hindus. This analysis will show that caste did not play, so far as the administration went, any significant part.

It is well known how faithfully Ibrahim Khan Gardi served Bhau Saheb on the field of Panipat, against his co-religionist Ahmad Shah Abdali. Muhammad Yusuf, a Gardi leader, who murdered Narayan Rao, was captured for the Peshwas by one Taj Khan Rohilla. How Shivaji's life was saved at Agra by a Musalman *Faras* I have mentioned elsewhere. If some Maratha families of Shivaji's time lost their importance during succeeding days, it was not due to the Peshwas deliberately putting them down. Many Brahman families of Shivaji's time also suffered equally—the Pingles, the Hanumantes, the Amatyas, the Sachivs, the Pratinidhis and a host of others, all more or less lagged behind as soon as the successors of those families ceased to possess personal worth.

In fact, the Maratha regime was particularly welcome as affording plenty of field for all and every person in the land, to show one's worth, whatever caste or rank in society one might have belonged to. This was the great practical benefit all people received from their Swaraj in those days. People got equal opportunity for service and distinction, as the accounts of over 100 different families which I have given with all available minute details will easily

prove. Personal jealousies and mutual bickerings there always were, and will ever remain; but they were not based on the principle of caste. The Sindias and the Holkars have always in history been hostile to each other from generation to generation, which cannot be attributed to caste at all. It is said that during Madhav Rao and Narayan Rao's regime, the Deshasthas and the Kokanasthas were at logger-heads, but this does not stand a critical examination. I can show members of both the castes ranging themselves strongly on each of the opposite sides. For three generations the Peshwas and the families of the Prabhu Chitnises were on the best and most intimate terms. So much so that to a great extent it is the Prabhu Chitnises who helped materially the rise of the Peshwas to eminence.

The greatest strength of the raj at the time of Shivaji and later, lay in this happy co-operation of all castes. When Damaji Gaikwad invaded Poona and Satara in the absence of the Peshwa far away in the east, it was a Maratha and a Prabhu general who saved the position for the Peshwa. If Tara Bai disliked Peshwa Balajirao, she had many Brahmans in her confidence and held in dislike many Marathas also. If Sakharam Hari, a Prabhu, was a staunch supporter of the Kokanastha Raghoba, Abaji Mahadev Sohoni, a Kokanastha and Manaji Fakde, a Maratha, were also his strong supporters.

During the first Maratha War nearly all the Maratha and other generals supported the national cause with great devotion and loyalty to the young Peshwa. Again and again on the battlefields of the

Karnatak and the north, at Panipat, at Talegaum, before the forts of Gwalior and Dohad, at Lalsot and Kharda, all castes fought with equal courage and valour under the common banner of the Peshwas and were often led by a Brahman general. Malharrao Holkar was a shepherd by caste but never showed disrespect to Baji Rao I. or his sons, on the ground of their being Brahmans. It was customary to hold a dinner at Poona on the anniversary of the death of Baji Rao I., when Sindia, Holkar and other intimate associates of Baji Rao used to be invited, and the principal lady of the Peshwa's house had to serve all the guests at the same time. Once it happened that Malharrao Holkar had his dogs with him when he came to the dinner. Gopika Bai, the lady serving the guests, asked Malharrao not to bring the dogs into the dining room. He replied he would not eat without his dogs sharing his dinner with him, and would rather dine in the outer verandah with his dogs, than come inside near the Brahmans and pollute them. He did not feel at all offended for thus being kept outside. People in Maratha days observed caste distinctions in matters of religious concern only, without letting their working life to be affected by them. The objection to inter-caste dinners and the fears of pollution by touch, have been recently accentuated when one caste is said to be above another and unwarranted annoyance is caused thereby. The superiority and inferiority of caste affected in those days purely religious functions, and not the common affairs of life. That is how I look at the question.

But this argument of caste and social barriers requires to be examined from another point of view. Domestic quarrels and caste differences have become stock arguments with very many writers, but there is hardly a fallen nation on the earth whose history is available, in whose case the same causes could not be said to have operated, for human nature being the same all the world over, man's selfishness always tries to profit at the sacrifice of others. In the case of India, at any rate, we have been hearing these same causes repeated again and again since the defeat of Paurav by Alexander the Great, right up to the fall of the Peshwas or even up to the present moment of communal tension. These stock arguments are easy to produce but difficult to refute. Human activity always needs some field of action for profitable enterprise, and so long as the custodians of a nation's interests are able to supply an aim for life or opportunities for work to its members, their restless activity will find vent outside and not have occasion to encroach on domestic fields. The greatness of a national leader can therefore be measured by the prospective enterprises which he can place before his followers. Much of a nation's success or failure depends, in my opinion, upon constructive genius and far-sighted stewardship on the part of its leaders. On close examination Shivaji would be found to have temporarily changed the whole genius of the Maratha nation. The system of the British constitution of England has been successful for centuries, because it ensures a succession of capable leaders, who serve the best interests of the nation.

A close study of the plentiful papers printed by Forrest and in the volumes of the *Persian Calendars*, shows how cautiously and insidiously the British were slowly undermining the edifice not only of the Maratha State, but of those of the various other Indian potentates as well. Professional traders as the British were, and alien both in religion and nationality, with always a strong basic support from England, they could easily afford to pose as disinterested arbitrators in the numerous internal disputes that necessarily cropped up, upon the dissolution of the central Mughal power. If they succeeded in any hazardous enterprise, as in the case of Plassey, well and good; if they failed they stood to lose almost nothing; they could quietly wait for a better opportunity for aggrandizement, as actually happened in the first Maratha War. The several Maratha leaders had till then a common aim and a common field for their ambition and enterprise, which were exemplified on the memorable battle fields of Panipat and Kharda, where all castes and people joined without any social jealousy. I am therefore at a loss to understand how caste could be instrumental in bringing down the Maratha power. It is the fashion of the victors to saddle a fallen nation with all conceivable blemishes, but we, as belonging to it, must not swallow all that we are told or taught, unless our reason is prepared to accept it on evidence.

12. *Prominent Maratha personalities.*

Students must observe the Maratha character as revealed in the various types which they meet with

in the course of their reading. The Marathas produced rulers and statesmen, soldiers and generals, judges and financiers, poets and writers, among whom not a few women also have distinguished themselves. They fought and conquered, and often suffered terrible reverses which they bore coolly and patiently. Their careers have not been stained by black deeds of cruelty or treachery. They treated opponents like true warriors with consideration and respect. Chanda Saheb, the Nawab of Arcot, was treated with dignity during his eight years' confinement at Satara. Two Englishmen who remained as hostages with Mahadji Sindia, spoke highly of that nobleman's treatment of them. Mushir-ul-Mulk, the Nizam's minister, was likewise honourably treated when he was a prisoner at Poona. Indeed, some of their troubles arose owing to misplaced clemency, as in the case of Raghunath Rao and Manaji Fakde; the British in such cases would have done short work of them, as they dealt with Hari Bhide in 1775 whom they blew away from the mouth of a cannon, for an unproved act of treason, while four months later Ganesh Vithal Waghmare was merely confined for a similar offence by Haripant Phadke.

To understand the deeds of Maratha valour and sacrifice, a mere glance at the genealogies of some of the historical families will be enough, *e.g.* the Sindias or the Patwardhans. The long and revered Kayastha family of the Chitnises of Satara produced able writers and diplomats for seven consecutive generations, a unique fact in history,

and have acquired an imperishable name in their voluminous *bakhars* and writings. Even if we exclude Shivaji and his *guru* Ramdas, we can find in Maratha history such brilliant names in various professions as Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav, Ramchandra Nilkantha Amatya and Parashuram Trimbak, Raghuji Bhosle and Trimbakrao Dabhade, Baji Rao and Madhav Rao Peshwas, Damaji Gaikwad and Sadasiv Rao Bhau, Ramchandra Baba and Khando Ballal, Mahadji Sindia and Nana Fadnis, Sakharam Bapu and Rama Shastri, Jija Bai, Radhabai Peshwa, Umabai Dabhade, Ahalya Bai, Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, and very many others, who have illumined Maratha history with unforgettable achievements and cleverly handled all the varied concerns of a nation in power. For the most part they dealt moderately with outsiders and gave India inspiration and hope, driving away the gloom which had overcome all, by supplying, as it were, a practical lesson that even mighty kings could with success be resisted in their evil actions. Thus, the example of the great Shivaji, if it cannot supply us with an ideal, should at least set us a limit, behind which we must not go, but beyond which we may certainly try to aspire.

13. *Munro's reflections on the Maratha strength.*

Even before the last Maratha war was started, Sir Thomas Munro had clearly pointed out some of the principal defects existing among the Marathas. On 12-8-1817 he thus wrote to the Governor General:*

* Gleig's *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, Vol. I., P. 461.

"When I consider the weakness of the native states and the character of the chiefs under whose sway they now are, I see little chance of a protracted resistance from them. They have not force to turn our armies and lengthen out the contest by a predatory invasion of our territories. They may run ahead for a few days but will have no time to rest or plunder. They will be exhausted and overtaken. It is not that they want resources, that they have not men and horses, but that there is no one amongst them possessed of those superior talents which are necessary to direct them to advantage.

"There is so little system or subordination in native governments that much more energy is required under them than under the more regular governments of Europe, to give full effect to their resources. Daulatrao Sindia was never formidable even in the height of his power. The great means which he possessed were lost in his feeble hands. The exertions of Holkar against Lord Lake were still weaker than those of Sindia. The power of Holkar's as well as Sindia's government has so much declined since that time (1805), that it is scarcely credible they would venture to oppose us. The superiority of our Government is so great that the event of any struggle is no longer doubtful."

14. *Lingering memory of the past.*

Maratha supremacy indeed came to an end with the Treaty of Bassein in 1802. The few Maratha States that now exist on sufferance, namely those in Malwa, Gujarat and the Deccan, only serve to put

us in mind of our former greatness. When Peshwa Bajirao II. was goaded into a war with the British, the first impulse of the latter was to restore the Maratha Kingdom to its former master the Chhatrapati of Satara. But Lord Hastings decided to destroy finally all rivals who were likely in future to contest British supremacy and with that view created a small subordinate principality at Satara under Pratapsinh who, however, did not enjoy his position long. After twenty years of precarious existence he was accused of conspiring against the British power and was exiled to Benares, where he ended his life in impotent and unrepentant anger. His brother Shahji succeeded him, but as he too died in 1848 without leaving a son behind, the Satara raj was finally annexed by Lord Dalhousie together with another large Maratha state, *viz.*, that of Nagpur, which similarly succumbed to the annexation policy of the same politician in 1854. The small state of Kolaba on the west coast held by a descendant of the once terrible Kanhoji Angre, also became extinct for want of an heir in 1840. The Maratha principality of Tanjore in the extreme south suffered a similar fate in 1855 with the death of its last Raja Shivaji. The feeling of rancour generated in the Maratha mind by such annexations was exhibited by a few members of that race, such as the Rani of Jhansi, Nanasahib of Bithur and his lieutenant Tatya Tope, who, in their own way, seized the chance offered by the troubles of 1857 and suffered for their rashness, leaving behind them a sad memory of the last faint effort for the resuscitation of the Maratha power. One might in a certain

sense even now detect a lingering memory of the same in the average Maratha mind, exhibited in some of the thoughtful writings and utterances in Maharastra during the last fifty years. Let us hope England and India will both shape their future history in mutual agreement.

15. *The task before us.*

Let us clearly grasp the task before us. Some eminent scholars in Madras have been assiduously tapping the Sanskrit and Tamil sources; what the people of Maharastra are doing I have already mentioned. I must say with regret that the field of work in regard to Gujarat, Rajputana and other parts of northern India is yet comparatively unexplored. Huge masses of Persian materials, as my friend Prof. Sarkar has frequently assured me, lie scattered all over this part of the country; they still await patient and selfless labour from many scholars. What we are doing at present mainly concerns political transactions; the social and economic spheres have hardly yet been touched. In these days of rapid advancement all round, India can no longer afford to remain isolated from the rest of the world. Careful investigation will tell us many new things which have been unknown before. In the latter half of the 18th century we meet with very many personalities in northern India, whom our accepted history condemns. Our own reason must prove or disprove this condemnation. The Emperor Shah Alam II. and his various officers like Mirza Najaf Khan, Mir Jafar, Mir Kasim,

Aliwardi Khan, Muhammad Reza Khan, the younger Ghaziuddin (for a time the king-maker of Delhi), the Rohilla Najib Khan and his son Zabeta Khan, Shuja-ud-Daula and his successors, Raja Chait Sinh of Benares, besides various Rajput kings, as also Jat and Sikh leaders,—all these and a host of others, Hindu and Muhammadan, seem to have proved powerless to save the liberty of India. How is it that all wisdom seems suddenly to have departed from this country to the west? May we not suspect that their careers have not yet been examined from our own records and from the Indian point of view? If we search for fresh materials we might perhaps be able to extract from them at least some redeeming features, even in the mistakes and failures of these men. Shall we judge and condemn them without going into all the evidence? Even the lowest criminal is given a chance to defend himself. May not some kindred spirits rise to clear them of the stigma? I appeal for workers and trust they will not be found wanting.

INDEX

Ahmad Shah Abdali — his invasions into India 139; accepts the Peshwa's challenge 140; kills Dattaji Sindia 142; expert in crossing rivers 144; defeats the Bhau 145; reaps no advantage from Panipat 147.

Aurangzeb—76; his war with the Marathas 77; 89; 91; salient features of Indian situation after his death 100-108.

Baji Ghorpade — 60.

Bajirao I.—107; hailed by the Rajputs 110; his brilliant career 112-116; opposed by Nizam-ul-Mulk 113; his encounter with Dabhade 124; his accession 125.

Bajirao II.—157; his accession 191; accepts British supremacy 192; Marquess of Hastings' reflections on 192; loses his opportunity 194; responsible for the fall of the raj 196; his personnel contrasted with the British 205-207.

Balaji Bajirao—125; manages the crisis at the death of Shahu 127-130; his mistake in putting down the Angria's navy 134; alienates the Rajputs 138; fails to support Bhosle 148.

Balaji Vishwanath—obtains Sanads from Sayyads 83; turns to advantage the salient features of Indian situation 101-108; undertakes expansion of Maratha power 103; his services to Shahu 105-07; obtains imperial sanads of *Swaraj*, *Chauthai* and *Sardeshmukhi* 111; dies 125.

Bharata Itihasa Sanshodhaka Mandal—43.

British, the—jealousy of the Marathas 155; their embassies Price, Mostyn, Broome 156; bid for world power 161; meet with failure 162; their personnel contrasted with Bajirao's 205-207; superior politics of 212; their advantageous position 221.

Chauth—origin 70; 80; its Sanads obtained from Sayyads by Balaji Vishvanath 83.

Daulatrao Sindia—responsible for the fall of the Maratha State 198; 202.

Deepsinh—a Rajput envoy to Maratha court 115.

Gopika Bai—19.

Hindu-pad-Padshahi—based on family interests 97; 102; 136; 147; its ideal accomplished 153.

Hindus—a complement of the nation with Muslims 53.

Historical research—the right spirit actuating 29-31; always a growing subject 54.

Jijabai—62.

Khare—his contribution to Maratha history 42.

Krishna Swami Iyangar—37.

Lukhji Jadhavrao—joins the Mughals in 1614, 61.

Madhavrao I.—character and achievements of 151-154; receives British embassy 156.

Mahadji Sindia—133; his comparison with Nana Fadnis 158;

his early career 159; employs De Boigne 160; wins the Maratha War 163; his services to the nation 164; his differences with Nana 165-167; realizes the strength of the British power 174; confused affairs of 176-79; accepts European tactics and forms trained battalions 202.

Maharastra—origin of the word 12,—Dharma, meaning and import 1-11.

Malik Ambar—60-61.

Maloji Bhosle—60.

Marathas, the—their ideal, *Maharastra Dharma* 1; actuated by religious ideal 7-11; evil effects of their religious ideal 13; their character described 15; visible relics of their influence along the Godavari and the Krishna 18; their influence in northern India 20, 26; their influence on literature and society 21-22; their historical prose 23; great writers of their times 25; their pride in past achievements 26; expansion of their power 107; why they look to the north 112; their expanded life and interchange between north and south 116-120; education of their women 117; their life enriched 119; change in their administration 130; instances of their centrifugal tendency 132; zenith of their power 147-153; causes of their downfall 190,—Bajirao II. and Daulatrao Sindia primarily responsible 195,—neglect of science 198,—lack of organization and divided command 202; origin of their superstition 208-10; their contrast with Western progress 211, and with superior British politics 212; caste not responsible for their fall 215; had equal opportunity for all 217; mild character of 221; prominent personalities of 223; Munro's reflections on their downfall 223; their old memories still linger 225.

Maratha history—a part of the united national history of India 31-34; 51-58; its scope 32, 56; extent of its materials 44, 50, 54, 55; its three periods 157; duty of the Maratha nation towards 226-227.

Maratha Raj—its constitution as laid down by Shivaji 79; how and why its constitution changed 102; (for details see *Saranjami* system); crises in its fortunes 207.

Mostyn—originates British aggression 156 & 213.

Mughal Empire—non-co-operation by the Rajputs against 108.

Muslims—effects of their conquest 3; form a complement of the nation with Hindus 53; what they thought of Maratha conquests 148-151.

Najib-ud-Daula—141.

Nana Fadnis—133; compared with Mahadji Sindia 158; his early career 159; his antagonism with Raghoba 160; forms the *Bara-Bhai* Council 160; wins the Maratha War 163; forms the

INDEX

four power alliance against the English 164 ; his differences with Mahadji 165-167 : his failings 168 ; drawbacks of his policy 170-173 ; limitations of his powers 180-183 ; fails to improve the military machine 184 ; what he could have done 185-87 ; his self-aggrandizement 188.

Narayanrao Peshwa—murdered 154.

Nizam-ul-Mulk —103 ; opposes Bajirao I. 113-116.

Panipat, battle of —its antecedent causes 136-140 ; its results 146-148 ; rise of Hydar Ali its indirect result 152.

Parasnis—his contribution to Maratha history 41.

Peshwas —trying to release holy places from Muslim hands 7, 46 ; made *Saranjami* system permanent 96 ; assign spheres of influence 97 ; their opponents 99 ; their friendship with the Rajputs 108 ; 118-119 ; brightest period of 125 ; Abdali's remonstrance against their aggressive policy 149-151; their neglect of science and artillery 198-202 ; accept European tactics 200 ; give up guerilla warfare 201.

Peshwas' Daftar—42.

Pissurlencar, Prof.—37.

Raghoba—141 ; his murder of Narayanrao 154 ; 172 ; sends Hindu agents to England 214.

Rajaram—wages War of Independence 77 ; development of the *Saranjami* System under 89-94.

Rajwade—4 ; his derivation of the word 'Maratha' 12 ; estimate of his work and contribution 35-40.

Ramdas—his influence on the course of Maratha history 64-68.

Ranade—his view of *Maharastra Dharma* 2.

Sadashivrao Bhau—defeated at Panipat 143-46.

Sakharam Bapu—forms the *Bara-Bhai* Council 160 ; 171-72.

Sambhaji—son of Shivaji 77.

Sane—his historical research 16, 37.

Saranjami System — 77; origin and development of 85-94 ; Shivaji's opposition to 87 ; perversion of its original object 95-96 ; necessitated by want of roads 97, 98.

Sardesai—47-49 ; his accounts of historical families 57.

Sardeshmukhi—its origin 70 ; 80 ; 83 ; 86 ; its *sanads* obtained by Balaji Vishvanath 83.

Sarkar, Sir Jadunath—his contribution to Maratha history 33, 36 ; his contrast with Rajwade 36 ; 45.

Sen, Dr.—37 ; 57.

Shah Jahan—61 ; 62.

Shahji—62-63.

Shahu—favours Maratha expansion 100-108; his early life 101; changes Shivaji's policy 102 ;

precarious position of 104; favoured by the Rajputs 109; receives Deepsinh, a Rajput envoy 115; creates field for employment for all castes 118; his character 121-124; his last days 127.

Shankraji Malhar—110.

Shivaji—combines the traditions of Devagiri and Vijyanagar 5; his guerilla warfare 6; his seal 7; Sarkar's contribution to his history 33; 37; 44; his ancestry 59; takes cue from his father 61-62; main incidents of his careēr 63; influence of Ramdas on 64-68; his object of the coronation ceremony 69; introduces a pan-Hindu ideal (*Hindu-pad-Padshahi*) 70; befriends Hindu princes 70; his all-India travel 74; his method of uniting Maratha elements 75; shows equal respect to all 76; constitution of his raj 79; his opposition to the *Saranjami* system 87.

Shrinivasachari, Prof.—37.

Tara Bai—103; 105; 107; 116; her intrigues 127-130.

Vyankoji Bhosle—Shivaji's brother 72.